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Translating Painting: Virginia Woolf and the Cubist Aesthetic

Emily Donaldson

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in
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of
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ABSTRACT

Translating Painting: Virginia Woolf and the Cubist Aesthetic

Emily Donaldson

Virginia Woolf's involvement with the visual arts was a complex and varied one. Her friendship with the leading English art critic Roger Fry and her membership in the Bloomsbury Group meant that she was a first-hand witness to the furor wrought by the introduction of the European Post-Impressionists to England in 1910 and 1912. As both her public and private writings demonstrate, the visual arts remained a pervasive influence on Woolf all her life. This thesis argues that Woolf's exposure to Post-Impressionism through her privileged intellectual position within the avant-garde cultural milieu resulted in a literary aesthetic which is distinctly Cubist.

The comparison between Woolf and the Cubist aesthetic will be seen to take place on a number of levels: structural, ideological and descriptive. Proceeding from a major discussion of background and method which takes into account both the ideological framework of the Cubist movement and critical definitions of "literary Cubism" per se, I apply Cubist readings to four novels: Jacob's Room, Mrs Dalloway, Between the Acts and To the Lighthouse. I also examine a number of Woolf's short stories. These works are discussed insofar as they relate to major themes relevant to a Cubist aesthetic such as Impressionism, Analytic versus Synthetic Cubism, concepts of time and space and issues of language and reflexivity.

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As Woolf has said, "one must renounce when the book is finished, but not before it is begun" (L2: 600).

Table of Contents

1. Method	
i. Introduction	1
ii. Cubism: An Outline	5
iii. Metaphor and Metonymy: Lodge, Jakobson	15
iv. Spatial Form	19
v. Literary Cubism: Some Examples in Method	26
vi. Woolf, Painting and the Post-Impressionists	38
2. Cézanne, the Early Stories	50
3. <u>Jacob's Room</u> : Impressionism vs. Cubism	62
4. <u>Mrs Dalloway</u> : Analytic vs. Synthetic Cubism	79
5. <u>Between the Acts</u> : Paradigm, Language and Reflexivity	110
6. Post-Impressionism as Theme: <u>To the Lighthouse</u>	133
Notes	152
Bibliography	157

The following abbreviations are used from time to time in reference to frequently quoted works by Virginia Woolf.

Title:

Key:

Between the Acts. 1941. (London: 1978)

BA

Collected Essays. 4 vols. (London: 1967)

E1 through E4

The Diary of Virginia Woolf, 1915-1941. 5 vols.

(New York: 1977)

D1 through D5

Jacob's Room. 1922. (London: 1976)

JR

The Letters of Virginia Woolf, 1888-1941. 6 Vols.

(New York: 1975-1980.)

L1 through L6

Mrs Dalloway. 1925. (New York: 1958)

MD

To the Lighthouse. 1927. (London: 1964)

TL

1 Method

i. Introduction

Although Virginia Woolf did not exactly keep a room at the Bateau-Lavoir, a strong argument can be made that she did share in much of the same modernist cultural climate as the Cubists. The aesthetic connection between the writing of Woolf and the painting of Cubism will be shown to take place on a number of levels, both direct and indirect. Defining the nature of these connections will be the subject of this thesis.

Obviously, the critic wields a good deal of power when she chooses which artists or movements merit comparison. As Laura Rice-Sayre and Henry Sayre note in "Autonomy and Affinity: Toward a Theory for Comparing the Arts," one danger the critic faces is losing track of her own presence and prejudices in the dialogue by assuming a stance of description rather than creation: "for as critics of the arts and their interrelations we too often act as if we believe that what we describe is the thing described, that our work is a kind of false facsimile . . . We forget that we too are 'making it new,' forging our own myth" (93). Not only must the critic tread with caution in this respect, therefore, but she should also recognize and respect the autonomy of systems of signification within the relations of these same systems (92).

Of special interest to Sayre and Rice-Sayre are the ways in which visual perception can be modified by linguistic manifestation. Critics, they believe, should not shy away from the linguistic ambiguity that is sometimes created between the arts--as, for example, Juan Gris' use of terms like "metaphor" and "rhyme" with respect to Cubism--but rather should explore further the structural implications of this semantic overlap:

In short, what we as critics of the interrelations of the arts have often considered the downfall of critical language--the irksome necessity of one discipline to borrow descriptive vocabularies from another--is perhaps language's greatest gift to the critic: these areas of linguistic overlap may well point to the interrelation of the arts as a dialectic of semiologic series. (89)

Sayre and Rice-Sayre suggest five basic ways in which artistic interrelations can be mapped by the critic: intentional collaboration; mesological conjunction; homological conjunction; radical conjunction; and accidental collaboration. If the first category, the intentional collaboration, refers to an ideal multi-disciplinary work where equal status is given to all the arts involved, then I would locate the relationship between Woolf and the Cubists as occurring somewhere between the second and third categories: that is, between direct influence and shared cultural milieu. This latter category, the mesological, is appropriate when the critic makes use of manifestoes or statements that define a common aesthetic or ideology for the different arts. Indeed, Cubism generated a substantial body of theoretical literature in the form of public statements, essays, books and interviews that became important elements in defining the goals of the movement. Virginia Woolf's writing practice as well as her comments on her art share a concern for many of the same problems and issues raised in these documents.

Some may feel that this leaves the idea of a "shared cultural milieu" open to interpretation. For clearly, there is some anachronism between the Cubist movement--which most critics consider to have taken place somewhere between 1906 and 1925--and Woolf, whose greatest novels were written between 1922 and 1941. Sayre and Rice-Sayre in particular have warned against the dangers of seeing Cubism as a generalized aesthetic which

"speaks to all the world." They contend instead that "as a system of signs, Cubism (either literary or plastic) speaks only to those who know either its conventions or those conventions that it parodies" (98). This view was shared by Ortega Y Gasset when he wrote The Dehumanization of Art in 1948. Modern art, he claimed: "will always have the masses against it. It is essentially unpopular; moreover, it is anti-popular" (5). The new art, he argued, addresses itself to a "specially gifted minority" that will understand its language.

In my view, there is no question that Woolf occupied both physically and intellectually the privileged position which made it possible for her to be both recipient of and participant in that specialized language. Her writings, both public and private, give direct testament to this fact. Indeed, I would extend this argument to say that a time lag was natural, if not necessary, in order for the aesthetic premises under which the Cubists worked to have travelled across the Channel and become generally available to the members of Woolf's intellectual milieu.¹ It is certain that Woolf had seen Cubist works during their heyday in 1910, but some time had to pass before "Cubism" could have evolved to the point of a generalized aesthetic. Indeed, Cubism today is still undergoing such a process of consolidation among critics.² My argument will be that the relationship between Woolf and Cubism is not merely homological--located simply in my own imagination--but is an aspect of the immediate cultural and historical locus in which she writes.

The discussion of Woolf and the Cubist aesthetic will begin with a look at the ideological and aesthetic aims of Cubism as an art movement, taking into account both painting and criticism. It will then proceed to a consideration of how the translation from painting to literature can and has been made by various critics. This will include an examination of the

interpretations of what has come to be known critically as "literary Cubism." Next, Woolf's own connection to Cubism as well as to the Post-Impressionist movement as a whole will be considered. A discussion of the theory of spatial form will conclude the major section on background and method.

The remaining chapters will examine a number of Woolf's short stories and four of her novels. Greatest attention will be paid to those works which I believe to be most conducive to Cubist readings. In my view this group includes Jacob's Room, Mrs Dalloway, and Between the Acts. A smaller amount of space has been accorded to To the Lighthouse. The reason for this is that I believe it to be a work in which the Cubist and Post-Impressionist aesthetic of the other novels tends to be expressed thematically as opposed to structurally and textually in the body of the writing itself. This present structure represents a change from the original undertaking, since I began this thesis with the assumption that To the Lighthouse--ostensibly Woolf's most direct treatment of art and aesthetics in a novel--would in fact provide the best example of a Cubist discourse.

Overall, individual works have been discussed insofar as they express significant themes relating to Cubism such as Cézannism, Impressionism, Analytic versus Synthetic Cubism, reflexivity and concepts of time and space. It should be noted that I do not believe the novels to represent any kind of chronological progression towards a Cubist aesthetic. Woolf's final novel, Between the Acts, for example, presents perhaps the most interesting case for a Cubist reading yet bears a closer resemblance, in terms of Cubism, to Jacob's Room than to To the Lighthouse. Nor do I believe that all of Woolf's novels can be considered Cubist--although Cubist elements might be discovered in all of them. I have omitted discussion of The Waves, for example, because I believe little can be gained by studying it in the light of Cubist theory.

I have made liberal use of Woolf's personal writings--her diaries and letters--in order to strengthen my argument, which, as I have already stated, rests on the assumption that Woolf's relation to Cubism goes deeper than simply my own subjective perception of it. I also rely heavily on those critical readings of Woolf which I believe are compatible with Cubist theory, even if these critics do not explicitly make the comparison themselves.

The present undertaking is relevant to the literary study of Woolf for several complementary reasons. I believe that Cubism and the general ferment of ideas associated with Cubism affected Woolf strongly, more strongly than most critics seem to assume: thus, an examination of these ideas can provide a viable philosophical framework for further study of Woolf's aesthetic ideology as well as new tools for interpreting Woolf's approach to writing. Although Woolf's participation in modernist aesthetics is often acknowledged in feminist and Bergsonist readings, critics have frequently been reluctant to attribute comprehensive philosophical motivations to her complex aesthetic. Through this thesis I hope to restore some of the imbalance created by these perceptions.

ii. Cubism: An Outline

Over the years, the amount of critical debate generated by the Cubist movement has demonstrated clearly the impossibility of interpreting it in any single, compelling way. Truly, the more closely one looks at Cubism the greater seems the danger that it will fall apart under scrutiny. It has been argued that Cubist art and theory represent related but essentially different manifestations of the same phenomenon, and as such do not always intersect (Roskill 13). These inconsistencies and contradictions mean that taking

"Cubism" as a comprehensive philosophical system poses a number of problems for the critic. Some of its greatest artists--such as Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso--for example, made no recorded statements on Cubism in the prewar years. Braque's first statement appeared in 1917 when he was recovering from a head wound suffered in the war, while Picasso did not make any formal comment until 1923, well after Cubism had ceased to be a part of the European avant-garde (Chipp 198). Similarly, some of its greatest spokesmen, such as Jean Metzinger, were only minor artists, or not painters at all, but writers, as in the case of Guillaume Apollinaire. Among the artist-critics there are discrepancies between intention and realization; theory and practice. Among critics present and past there has frequently been a tendency to over-intellectualize the movement, to align it too strongly with Bergsonism, relativity theory, Kantian philosophy, African primitivism, or mathematics. There are, furthermore, frequent critical debates over who should be included or excluded from the ranks of Cubism proper. This question is important for the obvious reason that the selection of representatives will largely determine how the critic perceives a movement's aesthetic or philosophical motivations. As a result, a number of painters and writers continue to remain at the periphery of the movement, including--to name a few--Blaise Cendrars, Henri Rousseau, Marcel Duchamp, Fernand Lèger, and Alfred Jarry.

Thus, while it can be argued legitimately that Woolf should not be called a Cubist because she did not call herself one, it is also true that many of the artists now considered by critics to be part of the Cubist movement did not necessarily put themselves there by choice either, at least not initially. Nor was "Cubism" ever the self-proclaimed title of the movement, but was originally the derogatory term notoriously bestowed on it by Louis Vauxcelles

around the time of the 1910 Salon d'Automne. "The Cubists," in fact, did not coalesce into a self-conscious group until Apollinaire first used the term in print in 1911--a date four to five years after Cubism is generally considered to have been "born," and at the end of what is usually considered its first major "phase."³

In this light, it is perhaps not surprising that Cubism's most important theoretical texts tended to arrive later than its most important paintings. Albert Gleizes and Jean Metzinger's much-vaunted work Du Cubisme, for example, was written in 1912, while Kahnweiler's The Rise of Cubism does not appear until 1915. It was frequently the case in Cubism that justification was retroactively tailored to suit action.

In a similar way, Virginia Woolf is often included in the ranks of the classification, the "Bloomsbury Group"--in spite of the fact that she and others on whom membership was bestowed at times questioned the very existence of such a group.⁴ Still, the "Bloomsbury Group," like "Cubism" continues to be a useful term for explaining a number of perceived similarities among people located within the same cultural milieu. Of course it would be ridiculous to claim that Woolf was as much a part of the Cubist movement as of the "Bloomsbury group," but it is nevertheless important to point out the status of "Cubism," as an imposed rather than an adopted categorization, and which as such should remain open for interpretation and questioning. The heuristic use of the term "Cubist" then, is rooted in the origins of the name itself, a fact which has sometimes been overlooked through years of critical revisionism.

What this means is that a balance must be struck between theory and practice, between writing and painting, particularly where the two sometimes seem incompatible. This is especially important in the case of Cubism, a movement whose polemical nature was inextricably bound up with the

theoretical claims it made for itself. Cubism's sensitivity to the ideology and culture surrounding it meant that it frequently drew its incentives from the winds of current debate (Roskill 150).

Historical distance, however, enables one to identify the more persistent aspects of Cubism. In particular, this endeavor has been facilitated greatly by post-war re-valuations of Cubism which have attempted to go beyond the purely formalist interpretations popular in Roger Fry's day, toward uncovering the aesthetic and ideological concerns fundamental to the movement.⁵ One critic, Winthrop Judkins, believes there are four constant features of Cubism in all its phases. They include: a deliberate oscillation of appearances; a studied multiplicity of readings; a conscious compounding of identities; and an iridescence of form (276). Unlike the Renaissance ideal--to which Cubism is often contrasted--where the subject is perceived as an integral whole which can be mimetically reproduced on canvas, in Cubism the subject is assumed to be unknowable in any purely objective sense of the word. It is the role of the artist to convey his/her limited sense of this reality while acknowledging the impossibility of ever doing so completely. For this reason, the subject is perceived as restless, ambiguous, fragmented, and many-faceted. Cubism is more about the process of knowing than it is about the products of knowledge since, as Gleizes and Metzinger claimed, "an object has not one absolute form: it has many: it has as many as there are planes in the region of perception" (qtd. in Chipp 214).

The most radical innovation of Cubism was its rejection of traditional painterly conventions such as chiaroscuro and one-point perspective in favor of a new pictorial language to express depth and form (Golding 58). In Cubism the subject is built up through a series of overlapping, geometrizing planes--I say "geometrizing" because they are not geometrical in any technical sense of

the word--which are intended to create the illusion of depth and surface simultaneously. By perpetually postponing the completion of the subject, this "layering" technique evokes a sense of process: of the creation of the subject over time and the buildup of what the Cubists referred to as "plastic consciousness." In Cubism we are frequently unsure whether parts of the object observed are receding or emerging, transparent or opaque, convex or concave. A single light source is eliminated in order to give the sensation of relief through a more arbitrary juxtaposition of lights and darks (Golding 71). Lines and forms are "over-determined" so that they can be interpreted as performing a variety of sometimes contradictory functions. This is done through a variety of techniques: the "bleeding" of tones which make the object both part of as well as in front of its background; the use of outlines which coincide with other outlines so that the continuity may be read around either or across both; and the use of surfaces which recede behind other surfaces and project over them simultaneously (Judkins 275). It is these devices which create what the Cubists called "iridescence"--a flickering, dynamic sense of movement and process within a static framework. Cubism thus imposes upon us a fundamental uncertainty of perception as we lose our ability to determine mass from space, organic from abstract form. In addition, the space around objects takes on an importance equal to the objects themselves, causing a conflation of void and matter. Spatial positions are defined relatively rather than absolutely.

Another feature of Cubism is its continual thwarting of the potential for aesthetic "unity" by playing on our perceptual expectations of an object as they are rooted in our a priori notions of it and in its conventional manner of representation. The scattering of familiar images in a Cubist portrait or still-life: a hand, nose, eye or the head of a violin, are merely the skeletons of objects

whose final form continually eludes us. These fragments, like the titles of the paintings, provide clues in order for us to begin the process of "decoding" the scene in terms consistent with our conception of it. But because Cubism assumes that knowing is never absolute, the Cubist never pretends to show absolutely what s/he depicts. It immediately becomes apparent that not all forms in Cubist painting have their equivalent in visual reality. We are thus forced to adopt an alternate reading which recognizes both the external reference of the painting as well as the internal referentiality of the work of art itself.

Clearly then, Cubism is a highly self-conscious, conceptual art form. This is stressed by its incorporation and juxtaposition of traditional techniques with more abstract and indefinite forms. Segments of Cubist paintings, for instance, may be modelled with chiaroscuro, and planes often appear to recede into the background in a manner similar to that used in perspective; yet every attempt made by our eye to follow these through ends in failure. This technique, called "passage" by the Cubists, constitutes both a denial and affirmation of classical space effected from within the tradition of perspectival illusionism. Here, writes Edward Fry, "the affirmation is in the receding steps from plane to plane, comparable to the evenly measurable space of one-point perspective; the denial is the disruption and scrambling of that recession. The reflexivity of self-awareness arises from the juxtaposed presence of both affirmation and denial" ("Picasso" 298). Where classical art always chooses the most pregnant moment possible for the presentation of an idea, Cubism, in contrast, "dethrones idea in favor of phenomenology and re-presents, in a highly self-conscious and intellectualized manner, the physical and mental processes subsumed within the idealism of classical representation" (299). These changes have a number of immediate effects. For one, they make the

claim that no matter how convincing, all artistic means of verisimilar representation are by necessity illusionistic. Thus Kahnweiler: "chiaroscuro can provide only an illusion of the form of objects. In the actual three-dimensional world the object is there to be touched even after light is eliminated" (qtd. in Chipp 254). Braque and Picasso's use of "trompe l'œil" nails "lacked" to the head of their compositions around 1912-14 was perhaps the most ironic and vivid manifestation of this philosophy. Although it appears real, the nail is only as tangible as the still life beneath it, requiring us to posit the two as ontological equals. In this way, Braque and Picasso draw our attention to the process by which nature is transformed into art, for by appearing to cast a shadow upon the flat surface of the canvas, the nail also casts doubts upon the illusions which surround it (Rosenblum 58).

Cubism also disrupts and debunks the artistic notion of disegno, on which most classical art is based. Disegno involves three stages: empirical observation, a priori knowledge, and the use of inherited conventions. Cubism, however, maintains the first two steps of this equation while replacing the third with the added complication of memory. "Unlike traditional painting," writes Fry, "Cubism replaces the role of remembered iconographic texts with the memories of perceptual and cognitive experience. This displacement of idea by process, experience and memory . . . is then re-intellectualized as eidetic Cubist signs" ("Picasso" 300). Fry goes on to note that while the role of memory has few precedents in the history of Western art, it does have linguistic models. One of these is the notion of contextualism, where subject, object and verb can still be seen to constitute a sentence even if their order is initially unclear. In a Cubist painting, similarly, the scrambled, displaced signs for a musical instrument or human face generate a contextual, reflexive reading of those signs without resorting to traditional illusionism

(299). For the Cubists, highly mimetic renderings of visual data had become obsolete in a culture where the majority of new information about the universe was non-visual, or at least not relevant to the visual arts. Whatever need for this kind of representation remained was probably better served by photography anyway. In response, Cubism effected what Fry has called a "disincarnation of the word." This entailed a splitting apart of word and image and the dissolution of iconographic signs into signified and signifier as a means of revealing those conventions which had once united them. Doing so allowed Cubism to maintain a simultaneously reflexive and critical relationship to the classical tradition: reflexive in that it operated by its own internal, contextual logic, but critical to the degree that it forged its own unwritten philosophy in order to accomplish this (Fry, "Picasso" 303).

One aim of Cubism was thus to highlight the status of artistic conventions as conventions, and not as systems with any greater claim to truth or reality than any other. As Gleizes and Metzinger wrote:

Above all, let no one be decoyed by the appearance of objectivity with which many imprudent artists endow their pictures. There are no direct means of valuing the processes by which the relations between the world and the thought of the artist are rendered perceptible to us. The fact commonly invoked, that we find in a painting the familiar characteristics which form its motive, proves nothing at all. (qtd. in Chipp 211)

This question--of the nature of the "real"--is one of the fundamental concerns of Cubism. Objects must be expressed in a way that enhances our multiple, subjective experience of them and this, for the Cubists, meant that they would contain all the inevitable distortions inherent in perception, the assumption being that when we look at an object we never come to it in the unfettered

light of a first perception, but rather apprehend it in a manner augmented or altered by what we know that object to be like. When we look at a person's face in profile, for example, although we may only be able to see half of their features, we know that the others exist. In accordance with this concept, the Cubists gave the viewer unrestricted access to all angles of the forms they depicted while still remaining true to the flat, two-dimensional reality of the picture surface. It is for this reason that Cubist paintings require a high degree of viewer engagement, for if the painting no longer assumes an absolute relation between message and viewer, its completion must be sought in our perceptual "gap" between them.

Cubism has sometimes been called by critics (e.g., Golding and Gray) an art of "realism" in the sense that it purports to seek a version of reality other than that found in conventional representations of experience. Apollinaire once claimed that for Cubists, "real resemblance no longer has any importance, since everything is sacrificed by the artist to truth, to the necessities of a higher nature whose existence he assumes, but does not lay bare" (qtd. in Chipp 222). However, as Christine Poggi has convincingly argued, there is some contradiction in the notion frequently expressed that Cubist painting strives toward an autonomous, internally-consistent realism. Pointing to Picasso's Cubist collages, she notes his method of conflating both "table" (the plane of actuality), and "tableau" (the plane of illusion), in a way which undermines the viewer's ability to experience the work according to a single paradigm. Thus: "any interpretation of Picasso's collages that emphasizes the artist's interest in calling attention to the medium in order to dramatize its integrity and primacy is blind to the radical disruptive force of Picasso's Cubist works" (Poggi 315). One reason for this confusion has been the influence of critics such as Gray who have assumed too much the influence of

Kant and their search for the “more stable elements” of reality in Cubism. The result of this perceived idealist influence was, in part, the categorization of Cubism into “Analytic” and “Synthetic” phases, since these terms are also crucial to Kantian philosophy (Robbins 280). But while there does seem to be a viable basis for dividing Cubism into these categories, as I will discuss in the section on Mrs Dalloway, it was not until the critic and curator A. H. Barr wrote his work on Cubism in 1936 that these terms came into use as historical-chronological designations (Robbins 282).

The Kantian notion of the self-sufficient object, the “thing-in-itself,” is actually one of two conventional paradigms for the experience of the art object which Cubism seeks to subvert. The other is the Renaissance concept of the object as seen through a metaphorical “window” mediated by the picture frame (Poggi 311). Cubism juxtaposes these paradigms so that elements in each of them are defined in relation to the other. This creates the essential paradox of the Cubist work: that it appears to exist both as a material object that takes its place among the world of “things,” while at the same time drawing attention to itself as a mode of representation (Poggi 312).

To understand the function of “realism” in Cubism then, is to understand also the essentially ironic, questioning and discursive tone of the movement. In Cubism, “realism” is not about mimetic complacency, but about radically questioning the status we give to the problems of knowing and representation--questions eminently transferable to discussions of writing. The provocative balance Cubism creates between realism and abstraction is perhaps best summed up in Picasso’s belated but apt statement in 1923 that: “from the point of view of art there are no concrete or abstract forms, but only forms which are more or less convincing lies” (qtd in Fry, Cubism 166).

iii. Metaphor and Metonymy: Lodge, Jakobson

In choosing to place Woolf and Cubism in the same interpretive category, it is important also to acknowledge the grounds on which they may be critically opposed. In his work The Modes of Modern Writing, for instance, David Lodge has placed Woolf and the Cubists on opposed structural planes based on Roman Jakobson's linguistic model which divides modern works into "metonymical" or "metaphorical" modes. Reiterating Jakobson's classification of Cubism as "manifestly metonymical" in one section of the book,⁶ Lodge, in a chapter on Woolf, claims that her work "clearly exemplifies" a development toward the metaphoric representation of experience (177). Obviously, the critical grounds for a strong comparison between Woolf and Cubism are significantly weakened if we take this basic structural division between the two as valid. I will therefore address what I believe to be the deficiencies in this argument.

As structuralist criticism, Jakobson's method purports to be applicable to both literary and nonverbal systems of signs alike, thus providing a framework for interdisciplinary study. It is founded on a formalist approach which assumes, according to Lodge, that "all critical questions about novels must be ultimately reducible to questions about language" (xi) and also on the somewhat insecure notion that "what is needed is a single way of talking about novels, a critical methodology, a poetics of aesthetics of fiction, which can embrace descriptively all the varieties of this kind of writing" (52).

Briefly, Jakobson's method assumes that language involves two distinct operations: selection and combination. Selection involves the perception of similarity and implies the possibility for substitution. It is thus the process by

which metaphor is generated. Metonymy, on the other hand, belongs to the axis of combination which emphasizes a relation of contiguity over that of similarity. It is associated with synecdoche in that it substitutes the part for the whole, the attribute for the thing meant. It thus operates through a process of deletion which still leaves part of the subject referred to intact. Because they do not change their notional message through the process of deletion, metonymic texts "resist" interpretation in a way that metaphoric texts do not. As such, metonymy is usually associated with realistic prose or non-literary texts because they are forwarded by contiguity, while metaphor is usually found in poetry and "literary" texts which "cut across the logical progression of discourse" (Lodge 85). Ultimately, however, any metonymic text must submit itself to a metaphoric reading insofar as it demands literary interpretation.

Determining what is metaphor and what is metonymy depends largely on the context in which the trope is found. As Lodge points out, the vision of a longing face and a turkey dinner in A Christmas Carol would be metonymic while in a nature show it would be metaphoric (85). As well, metaphor can be contained within a genre that is basically metonymic in the same way that a metaphorical text requires some degree of metonymy in order to maintain its logical coherence. Film, for example, would be considered metonymic, although the technique of montage within film is defined as metaphorical. Jakobson defines Cubism as metonymic because he perceives in it the transformation of the object into a set of synecdoches--ie. body parts, fragments of objects--which are meant to imply the remainder of the absent object.

Gertrude Stein, who proclaimed herself to be a Cubist (as have most of her critics), is classified by Lodge as more Surrealist (defined by Lodge as metaphorical) than Cubist because her writing "does not confine itself to merely changing the relationships of contiguous planes and of parts to wholes

as they are in nature . . . but presents an object in terms of other objects often far removed from it and from each other in context" (152).

With Woolf, on the other hand, Lodge sees a steady progression from metonymy in her early novels to metaphor in her later ones, a pattern which he believes culminates in The Waves. This he associates with a corresponding increase in emphasis on the repetition of motifs and symbols as well as on the local texture of metaphor and simile (177). The plot lines of The Voyage Out and Night and Day, for example, are said to be forwarded by contiguity because they pursue a logical chain of events. In Mrs Dalloway, on the other hand, the principle of linear narrative is abandoned for simultaneity and stream of consciousness. Interestingly enough, Lodge considers Jacob's Room a metonymic text in spite of its prevalent use of metaphor and simile--a classification which, by his terms, makes it structurally compatible with Cubism. This is because, he argues, "its experimentalism is all performed on the chain of combination--the chain of contiguous events that is Jacob's life--and consists mainly in cutting away huge sections of this chain and viewing the remainder from odd angles and perspectives" (183).

Where I think Lodge and Jakobsons' estimations fall short though, is partly in their interpretation of Cubism, but also in their attempt to fit subjects into categories which are too rigid and inflexible. A more detailed look at Cubism, for example, proves that to describe it merely as the synecdochic or metonymic representation of a missing entity is an over-simplification. More important to Cubism is an engaged questioning of why this should in fact be so. Cubist paintings are full of forms and planes which cannot be said to correspond to any particular whole, but rather "metaphorically" refer to the texture and movement of reality as it is experienced by the artist. The paradoxical status of the object is thus an essential part of Cubism--a

dimension which cannot be explored through Lodge's and Jakobson's formulations. A newspaper clipping in a Cubist painting, for example, is meant not only as a metonymy for the entire newspaper but is also a metaphorical representation of a metonymic component of the larger form it refers to. Put more simply: it stands for itself, but it also forms a part of a thing not itself. Critical evidence pointing to the highly political nature of the majority of Picasso's collaged newspaper clippings, moreover, indicates that they hold yet another level of meaning outside their immediate object-hood within the composition (Cottingham, *passim*).

Lodge's description of Woolf's metaphoric prose is close to most working definitions of literary Cubism. He notes, for example, Woolf's use of paratactic syntax where the loose construction of clause after clause "perpetually postpones the moment when the sentence will commit itself to something final" (180). He notes also her use of semi-colons over full stops; her preference for the commonplace over the transcendental; the lack of any "precise images"; the plotlessness and impersonality of her narratives where "endings are false endings, or non-endings"; as well as her use of arbitrary cut-off points (180). In other words, it is not so much that Lodge's analysis of Woolf's writing is invalid--it is in fact frequently insightful and illuminating--but rather that the method he uses is neither as consistent as he claims nor as clear-cut. More to the point, while Jakobson's structuralism may work well as a means of designating texts into broad categories, it may also have the effect of closing off individual texts for analysis in places where it might be more fruitful to open them.

It is also important to acknowledge that Lodge never stringently insists on the mutual exclusivity of one mode of writing over another. Nor, in fact, does he ever specifically pit Woolf against Cubism. Quite the contrary, he sees

metaphor and metonymy as relative terms whose identity can be muddled depending on the context. He sees Forster's A Passage to India, for instance, as a symbolist novel "disguised" as a realist one in that it contains few metaphorical or even metonymical tropes, but is thematically metaphorical as a result of its "rhetorical patterning." In contrast, he sees the structure of the novel as metonymical because of the way it connects topics on the basis of contiguity rather than similarity (98). Clearly, the Jakobson/Lodge method can afford some useful analysis in particular situations. Given Lodge's standards of rigorousness, however, one might question its success as the comprehensive structural tool he sets out to forge.

iv Spatial Form

Woolf's critical writing has been called "a sophisticated attempt to preserve the meaning of the temporal experience of reading the novel in a spatial metaphor" (Dowling, Bloomsbury 105). Woolf herself believed that to appreciate the novel as a work of art one must apprehend it as a simultaneous whole, in a manner closely akin to Joseph Frank's concept of "spatial form."⁷ Indeed, Allen McLaurin has also written that: "the achievement of the sense of the 'moment,' of the instantaneous effect of a picture is clearly one of Virginia Woolf's aims" (80). However, the application of terms like "space" and "form" to the temporal realm of literature clearly raises some problems for the textual critic. Before proceeding to a general discussion of Woolf and the Cubist aesthetic, therefore, I would like to address some of the issues that have arisen as a result of Frank's influential theory.

Frank saw time and space as the two extremes defining the limits of the arts, and he believed that it was possible to trace their history based on an

observation of their oscillation between these two poles. For Frank, modern poetry and prose represented the most radical move toward space, because they depended to an unprecedented degree on the juxtaposition of disconnected word-groups or "units of meaning" which must be apprehended simultaneously rather than sequentially. For this reason, he claimed, both modern poetry and the novel "can be properly understood only when their units of meaning are apprehended reflexively in an instant of time" ("Modern Literature" 232).

I would like to point out first that I do not believe the theory of spatial form to be necessary to establishing a relation between Woolf and Cubism. To my eyes, Frank's theory is useful not so much as a framework which can be applied to Woolf's writing, but rather as one which sheds retrospective light on Woolf's own utterances on her art and how it may relate to Cubism. It is of course possible to argue, as Walter Sutton and others have (e.g. Kermode, Giovanni), that the concept of spatial form is severely restricted by the nature of the mediums it proposes to unite: literature, which is experienced through time; and painting, which is experienced in space. Because the analogy can ultimately only be made indirectly on a metaphorical level, these critics argue that it is, therefore, too abstract, too generalized to be useful to the study of literature.

But literary styles are nearly always defined through some level of metaphor. Terms like "stream of consciousness," "deconstruction," "Imagist" or "Surrealist" are, after all, examples of critical metaphors that have been naturalized to the point of transparency. Take this one step further, and we are confronted with the philosophical problem of the metaphorical status of language in general. Seen on this scale of values, the question of metaphor becomes one of degree rather than kind. Indeed, I will argue that this very

subject--the nature of the "real" as opposed to the metaphorical--is a question fundamentally uniting both the art of the Cubists and the art of Woolf.

Yet accepting this premise does not mean that any metaphor is appropriate for any circumstance. It is still possible to say that the vehicle of the metaphorical language we use can be more or less appropriate to the tenor; and it is because I find the two complementary here that I believe the concept of spatial form to be entirely suitable for the study at hand. In my view, using the term "spatial form" in reference to Woolf's work is, in a sense, entering into the same metaphorical realm that she herself sets out to create. Further, it is a metaphor which is historically attuned to the sensibility of the modern project in painting and writing.

Wendy Steiner has claimed that the way in which different periods use the inter-art analogy "reveals much of what is essential to the period's genres, or writer's overall aesthetics" (*Colours* 18). In the case of Woolf and Cubism, this metaphorical realm has a clear significance. One of the most representative arguments against spatial form was that of G. Giovanni, who claimed that the task of the critic seeking inter-artistic comparisons is to distinguish what in each of them "is actually given and is an affinity, and what is not given but suggested; and further, to distinguish between what is suggested by way of analogy and is analyzable, and what is the by-product of perception, or of a mood, and is irrelevant" (193). The point that Giovanni missed, however, is that it is exactly this comfortable, static relationship between "intrinsic" and "extrinsic" that modern writers and painters set out to destroy; and this is partly what makes the comparison between Woolf and the Cubists such fertile ground for study. If the status of the subject is, contrary to Giovanni's assumption, indeterminate, then "what is actually given" can only be a part of the whole picture; and if the work of art is to seek its completion in

the perceptual participation of the viewer/reader, then every "by-product of perception" will be relevant to the work itself. Whether or not one agrees that this is the actual effect of these works is in some ways irrelevant; for if we ignore these explicit intentions then we have missed half the point. As Gillespie states it: "assuming that one can identify and define relationships between the visual and verbal arts, one has to recognize that these relationships are neither universal nor constant. Similarities between the two art media can always be found, but different comparisons dominate in different time periods" (14).

The metaphorical status of "spatial form" may actually be an advantage in focusing our attention on particular narrative techniques. As Eric Rabkin has argued, any narrative diegesis has both a diachronic and a synchronic aspect. According to him, "spatial form" should be seen as the metaphorical substitute for this synchronic aspect which represents "not the plot, which is actual only in the diachronic reading, but the (changing) constructs of the underlying story, the familiar which the text defamiliarizes" (256). Seen in these terms, the structural innovation of the modern novel may be defined as a privileging of the synchronic over the diachronic (plot-oriented) aspect of narrative; which, in turn, requires of the reader a greater ability to create synchronic connections and resolutions. One of the most common ways that twentieth century literature has sought to achieve this sense, according to Rabkin, is through the employment of structural devices creating fragmentation and attenuation, both of which will have the effect of creating diachronically a synchronic suspension in the text (256). In Cubism also we see a parallel tendency, for it too defamiliarizes subject-matter through the fragmentation of the conventional "narrative" of the visual work (found in

devices like perspective), in favor of a synchronic construction which takes place in the locus between viewer and painting.

Writing to Roger Fry in 1918, Woolf claimed: "I'm not sure that a perverted plastic sense doesn't somehow work itself out in words for me" (L2: 285). Like Frank, she believed that the most important part of reading takes place after the process is actually finished. In her essay "How Should One Read a Book?," for instance, she explained how "there hang in the mind the shapes of the books we have read":

The first process, to receive impressions with the utmost understanding, is only half the process of reading; it must be completed, if we are to get the whole pleasure from a book, by another. We must pass judgment upon these multitudinous impressions; we must make of these melting shapes one that is hard and lasting. But not directly. Wait for the dust of reading to settle; for the conflict and the questioning to die down. . . . Then suddenly without our willing it, for it is thus that Nature undertakes these transitions, the book will return, but differently. It will float to the top of the mind as a whole. And the book as a whole is different from the book which is received currently in separate phrases. Details now fit themselves into their places. We see the shape from start to finish; it is a barn, a pigsty, or a cathedral. (E2: 8)

One important connection that may shed light on Woolf's thinking on this subject lies in her contact with the theories of Charles Mauron. Mauron, a French aesthete and translator--called Bloomsbury's "Gallic representative" by Dowling (Bloomsbury 29)--was first introduced to Woolf and others by Roger Fry. Fry had translated several of Mauron's works on art

and literature into English and had become strongly influenced by his ideas. Mauryon himself translated both Orlando and Flush into French and unsuccessfully attempted To the Lighthouse. Woolf had also attended his lectures on Mallarmé in London.

Mauryon discouraged temporal notions of "story" in favor of the application of static and spatial terms to literature. He believed the literary text to be the "surface which delimits the volume" while the prose word was part of an interconnecting web which, like the surface of a sculpture or the texture of a painting, was connected to all other aspects of discourse (Dowling, Bloomsbury 31). Fry was especially impressed with Mauryon's suggestion that the spatial volumes modelled by the artist could find their equivalent in the "psychological volumes" shaped by the writer. In his work The Nature of Beauty in Art and Literature, first published by Woolf and her husband at the Hogarth Press, Mauryon wrote: "'as the painter creates a spatial being, the writer creates a psychological being.' Such, I think, is the hypothesis we might admit as the basis of all literary criticism" (66-7). Mauryon saw Cubism as a strong example of an artistic movement preoccupied with attaining more meaningful expressions of form: "Modern theories of painting make straight for Cubism, and I doubt if any reasonable argument has been found to bar the way" (14). Without these kinds of analogies, Mauryon further argued, "there can be no rhythm, nor order, nor unity of any kind" (qtd. in Dowling, Bloomsbury 32).

Fry was an enthusiastic adherent of Mauryon's ideas, claiming that his analogy between the two different kinds of "volumes" was "full of fruitful suggestions":

It may be no more than an analogy, but it enables us for the first time dimly to grasp what it is of which the relations are felt by us

when we apprehend esthetically a work of literature. Up to now, owing to the extreme complexity and rich variety of evocation in literature, we have not been able to isolate its special and peculiar substance. I believe M. Maury has at least pointed in the right direction. . . . (Transformations 9)

In 1936 Fry and Maury attempted to apply this "method" to a collection of Mallarmé's poems translated by Fry. In his introduction, Fry wrote: "Every word carries with it an image or idea surrounded by a vague aura of associations . . . When a word is apprehended, then, this aura takes shape in the mind, and when a second word is joined to the first . . . this changes the aura of the first word; expanding, contracting or colouring it as the case may be" (290). Interestingly enough, Fry also compared Mallarmé's experiments with Cubism. He wrote: "the theme is frequently as it were broken to pieces in the process of poetical analysis, and is reconstructed, not according to the relations of experience but of pure poetical necessity. In this he anticipated by many years the methods of some Cubist painters" (301).

Maury's terminology is also echoed in Woolf's review of Percy Lubbock in her essay "On Re-Reading Novels." She writes:

When we speak of form we mean that certain emotions have been placed in the right relations to each other; then that the novelist is able to dispose these emotions and make them tell by methods which he inherits, bends to his purpose, models anew, or even invents for himself. Further, that the reader can detect these devices, and by so doing will deepen his understanding of the book. (E2: 129-30)

Yet Woolf is also extremely aware of the inherent temporal and spatial barriers that separate the two arts. In "How Should One Read a Book?" she

wrote: "the thirty-two chapters of a novel are an attempt to make something as formed and controlled as a building; but words are more impalpable than brick; reading is a longer and more complicated process than seeing" (E2: 2). A critical evaluation of the writing of Woolf and the aesthetic of modern art should, I believe, mirror the same concerns that she herself expresses; that is: a strong conviction that the two arts tend toward a common goal, and an equally strong acknowledgment of where they must sometimes part.

v. Literary Cubism: Some Examples in Method

A useful way of deciding whether Virginia Woolf's work should be considered Cubist is to take a look at how other literary critics have interpreted the aesthetic designation of "literary Cubism" in the past. Much has been said by critics about who and what constitutes literary Cubism, but because there are no hard and fast rules determining the translation between writing and painting, it becomes clear that different critics may hold extremely different notions regarding the basis for a comparison. I believe it is possible, however, to divide Cubist critics into those who would like to see Cubism as an isolated phenomenon whose aesthetic framework has only a limited application to paintings or writings outside its immediate coterie of "members," and those who conceive of it as the core expression of the modern movement in painting and writing. These latter critics tend to view Cubism as the aesthetic apotheosis of tendencies exhibited in all artistic media of the modern period in that it is based on ideational notions easily manifested and adaptable to different artistic realms. As such they stress its value as a heuristic device for explaining stylistic and technical innovations that will shed light on the period concept.

Woolf, however, does not make Wendy Steiner's canon of Cubist authors in her chapter "A Cubist Historiography" in The Colours of Rhetoric.⁸ Those who do include Gertrude Stein, William Carlos Williams, Guillaume Apollinaire, Ezra Pound, Wallace Stevens, André Gide, E.E. Cummings, Alain Robbe Grillet--all of whom, in Steiner's view, share a common understanding of the nature of the Cubist project in writing. Like Sayre and Rice-Sayre, Steiner limits her list because she feels there is a danger that Cubism has become too much of a convenient, catch-all phrase for modern art in general. She believes the basis for an analogy in Cubist writing and painting should be found in matching technical elements between the two media and in the comparison of respective ideologies and aesthetic pre-suppositions. Literary devices such as punning, contradiction, parody, and word play fit into this description, for example, because they create a state of ambiguity essential to Cubist painting.

Steiner also makes the important point that the period concept of "Cubist" creates an identity for texts, as much as texts create the identity of the period concept. She writes: "the Cubist work, Cubism as a period, and a period conceived of Cubistically are all scrutinies of the process of knowledge itself" (Colours 196). As such, the problem becomes how to determine the extent to which the characteristics of a period or genre actually exist prior to our articulation and manipulation of them. Steiner concurs with Felix Vodicka who argues that the meaning of a critic's concretization of a text is to compel a confrontation between the properties of the work and the period's literary requirements (195).

Like many other literary Cubist critics, Steiner believes that the Apollinaire dictum--"geometry is to the plastic arts what grammar is to the art of the writer" (qtd in Chipp 223)--should be the basis for assessing the Cubist

status of a work of literature: "just as the Cubists translated reality into geometric relations which were not only in harmony with the medium of their art but were also the principles governing that medium, Stein translated her subjects into grammatical categories with the same double relation to her medium, language" (Steiner, "Limits" 136). The sentence is thus seen to form "a unit of atemporal knowledge with an inner balance equivalent to the grammatical relations of the elements within it" that, in turn, is seen to be analogous to the Cubist accommodation of three dimensional subject-matter to the picture plane through a geometrical organizing principle (137).

According to this argument, Stein's use of "non-representational" pronouns is equivalent to Cubist two-dimensional colour planes, since both units "relate directly to the abstract principles determining the two media" (Steiner, "Limits" 147). These units are then grouped together for their relational status within their respective contexts. But both mediums contain examples of non-relational units as well. In Cubist painting the lines and planes that are made to look like recognizable features or elements of objects are seen to correspond to the occasional symbols--including nouns and verbs of action--found in Stein's prose. In both media, Steiner believes, these non-relational units cause the immediate emergence of the subject through a mixed time sense created by the introduction of memory or a priori knowledge. Based on this logic, the move to Synthetic Cubism is seen as characterized by an increase in relational units at the expense of mimetic ones, a transition which finds its equivalent in Stein's increased use of verbal tropes in her later work (149).

The treatment of time and space is also extremely important to Steiner's method. Here, she bases the principle of equivalence on opposition--making the ambiguity of spatial relations in Cubism analogous to the ambiguity of

temporal relations in Stein's work. Stein and the Cubists are linked, therefore, on the grounds that both reverse the conventional treatment of time and space associated with their own particular medium:

Where the subject of a painting normally appears in an arrested moment of time, in Cubist art the subject is definitely a temporal object. And whereas literature normally develops its subjects gradually from one sentence to the next, supplying new information as it proceeds, Stein's subjects were to be totally present, fully developed, in each atemporal sentence. ("Limits" 145)

What is important to Steiner is not so much the sense of time or space created in the Cubist work per se, but rather the process of overcoming the inherent spatio-temporal limitations of the medium in which the Cubist is working.

Steiner is also adamant about the limitations of the Cubist analogy itself--a limitation she traces to fundamental, insurmountable differences between the projects of painting and writing themselves. While language, she argues, is a system of signs which combine to form higher-level signs such as sentences, in painting signs themselves are created from paint, which is non-significant material. Gertrude Stein is offered as a cautionary tale for critics and artists alike who push the similarities between the arts too far. Steiner believes that while Stein's adaptation of Cubism to her writing produced some of the most fascinating experiments in modern literature, she also believes that Stein eventually began to over-step the boundaries of her medium by trying to accommodate a set of untranslatable visual norms to a set of literary ones ("Limits" 131).

Steiner is certainly right to recognize this fundamental divergence between the arts. For as one critic has noted: "when the similarities between

the two art media are stressed too often, the obvious differences, which no one would deny, are reasserted" (Gillespie 14). These are not sufficient grounds, however, for abandoning the project altogether. A healthy skepticism is essential to any comparison of the arts, but a wholesale rejection of the analogy may prevent a view from a broader scale. Although Steiner notes the different means of signification basic to these arts, she still fails to note a number of areas of similarity. Indeed, one of the fundamental concepts of Cubism was the principle of the essential correspondence of all the arts (Gray 96). Steiner misses, for example, the Cubists' attempt to overcome some of the limitations she names by incorporating materials which already function as "signs"--such as actual words painted on the canvas or newspaper clippings--into their paintings. Of importance also is the fact that at some point both the painted image and printed word are created out of non-significant material and as such, may be changed in order to function in more similar ways. Woolf herself draws attention to this problem in an essay on Walter Sickert--an essay which might be seen as a useful blueprint for approaching Woolf herself in the same capacity:

Here the speakers fell silent. Perhaps they were thinking that there is a vast distance between any poem and any picture and that to compare them stretches words too far. At last, said one of them, we have reached the edge where painting breaks off and takes her way into the silent land. . . . But since we love words let us dally for a little on the verge, said the other. Let us hold painting by the hand a moment longer, for though they must part in the end, painting and writing have much to tell each other: they have much in common. The novelist after all wants to make us see . . . It is a very complex business, the mixing and

marrying of words that goes on, probably unconsciously, in the poet's mind to feed the reader's eye. (E2: 241)

Like Steiner, Randa Dubnick uses grammar as a comparative structure in her study of Stein's Cubism. For her, the breakdown of subject matter in Analytic Cubism into repetitive, monochromatic, overlapping planes is analogous to Gertrude Stein's use of repeated clauses, extended syntax, and vague, constricted vocabulary in writing (4). She too interprets the move to Synthetic Cubism as manifested in Stein's increased emphasis on the "plastic" or "poetic" qualities of words as words in her later writing. Unlike Steiner, however, Dubnick links Stein's early work with Analytic Cubism on the basis that both operate within Jakobson's metonymical axis of contiguity while Stein's later poetry creates the effect of Synthetic Cubism by turning to the axis of selection associated with metaphor. Stein maintains her obscurity, according to Dubnick, by creating sentences in which words continue to "mean" in isolation but which do not combine syntactically, semantically or grammatically in the context of the entire sentence (37). This is done by employing grammatical syntax and rejecting its internal rules just as Synthetic Cubism refers to traditions of illusionistic space only to counter them through ambiguity and playfulness.

Apollinaire's grammar/geometry dictum serves Steiner and Dubnick well in terms of creating a systematic framework for comparing the arts. Rigorous as it may seem, however, it is a good example of how such comparisons may lead the critic astray through too stringent an insistence on methods of translation. Apollinaire did believe that the use of geometry in Cubism could provide an impartial, scientific means of achieving the elusive "fourth dimension."⁹ In practice, however, Cubism had little or no foundation in scientific method; the geometrical analogy simply provided a

convenient means of describing the modular, proportional relationships found in the Cubist aesthetic (Golding 130). There is evidence also that notions of space-time and a fourth dimension were already extant in classical *disegno* (Fry, "Picasso" 299). And, in his Cubist treatise of 1915, Kahnweiler stated that "the name 'Cubism' and the designation 'Geometric Art' grew out of the impression of early spectators who 'saw' geometric forms in the paintings"; he adds, however, that: "this impression is unjustified, since the visual conception desired by the painter by no means resides in the geometric forms, but rather in the representation of the reproduced objects" (qtd. in Chipp 257). At its fullest expression in the art of Picasso, the "geometrizing tendency" of Cubism is more about undermining the conventions of classical draftsmanship than about technically sub-dividing the image. The grammatical comparison has its place and its use, but has limited applicability in describing the larger philosophical problems of Cubism as a whole.

William Rubin has made clear this relation:

While geometric simplification is certainly an attribute of the Cubist style, the chance name with which the movement was saddled because of a very particular picture has tended to direct thinking toward this attribute and away from the handling of space, of light and the linkage of planes--all of which are finally more central to a definition of Cubism than any particular aspect of its variable morphology. (180)

Marjorie Perloff, in The Poetics of Indeterminacy, has created a set of terms for literary Cubism which I believe have particular significance for Woolf's writing. Dealing with modernist poetry rather than prose, Perloff distinguishes between two major tendencies in poets of this time: those who write a discourse about indeterminacy and those who write a discourse of

indeterminacy. The former include the Symbolists, amidst whose ranks one finds Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Yeats, Eliot, Auden, Stevens and Frost. The second strain, or “anti-Symbolists,” are most closely tied to literary Cubism. Perloff calls these the poets of “literalness” or “free play,” who find their source in Rimbaud, continuing down through Stein, Pound and Williams.¹⁰

In many ways, the course of Woolf’s novelistic work represents a series of fluctuations from one strain to the other: from novels such as To the Lighthouse which thematize the problems of Post-Impressionism, to Between the Acts, whose very texture embodies these problems. It could also be argued, I believe, that Cubism itself contains this shift: from the visual deconstruction of the image in the Analytic phase to the complex buildup of the object in the Synthetic phase.

For Perloff, membership in the two groups she creates seems to depend on the degree to which the text must reach outside itself to an external, verifiable universe in order to generate meaning. The texts that deny this pattern are based on what she calls a “poetics of indeterminacy.” These texts have a number of significant characteristics: an attempt to block out logic; the use of fragmented images which do not coalesce into symbolic wholes; a pattern of unfulfilled expectations of causality or relatedness; a pervasive surface tension created by “disjunctive metonymic relations”; and a baffling obscurity created by simple subject-predicate sentences (10). According to Perloff, disclosure of meaning in these texts seems perpetually imminent but is perpetually denied, which, in turn, creates a shift in focus from an emphasis on signification to the play of signifiers themselves. The difference between writers such as Eliot and Beckett is thus described as the difference between using indeterminacy as a motif and indeterminacy as the basis of discourse itself. For Eliot and Auden, she argues, the act of writing poetry becomes a

"rendering of the irrational into the concretion of the symbolic," where coherence is found in the work's organic unity, as well as in the multiplicity of possible meanings this creates for the reader (27).

What distinguishes the Cubist work from other modern literary texts then, is the interplay it creates between referentiality and other fragmented, more indeterminate items which render ambiguous the nature of the "real." In Cubist painting, this is done by creating a compositional tension between painting system and self-ordering system; between conventional symbols, such as letters, musical notes, or numbers and what Perloff calls "stylized images of reality" (72). Perloff also sees Gertrude Stein as the consummate example of the degree to which these notions can be transferred from painting to writing. She notes Stein's use of arbitrary discourse, play on words, and movements from one realm of consciousness to another to create indeterminacy. Like Cubist painting, she admires the ability of Stein's writing to simultaneously accommodate a number of contradictory yet valid "readings" of its subject (95).

One of the main points of contention between critics defining literary Cubism is the role of symbolism and metaphor in Cubist poetics. This is clearly an important question for a Cubist discussion of Woolf, since her texts are replete with both. Insofar as Perloff equates literary Cubism with the elimination of definable referents outside the literary work, for example, she would seem to reject metaphor and symbolism as plausible Cubist tropes. Gerald Kamber, conversely, in his study of Max Jacob's Cubist poetics, sees these elements as integral parts of the literary Cubist composition. Kamber is also more generous in his estimation of the transferability of Cubism from the painterly to the literary realm than are critics such as Steiner and Dubnick. Cubist painting and writing, he believes, are conjoined by a common optic, a

common mystique, a common revolutionary ideal as well as a common attachment to the past (58). The connection between techniques in writing and painting should thus be based on their relation to the historical, social and psychological components of these aesthetic systems. It is the highly figurative nature of Cubist techniques, Kamber believes, that makes them particularly applicable to writing:

For critics not to grasp the transposition onto the verbal plane of these basically figurative techniques is perhaps to insist too stringently on the exclusive application of such concepts to the medium of painting. Illustrious critical precedents exist for such transference, and the Cubists themselves were thoroughly imbued with the spirit--and perhaps the letter--of the Baudelairean "correspondances." (28)

Kamber compares elements of Jacob's work to the criteria for Cubist painting set out by the art critic Winthrop Judkins. These include a pulling to pieces of the object; a rebuilding of the pieces into an independent composition; a placing together of objects (or parts of them) from an unrestricted range of observations; and a shifting of emphasis from the reality of the object to the reality of the aesthetic surface (Judkins 270-71). Just as Cubism both retains and demolishes the image, so Jacob, according to Kamber, uses duality, plurality and simultaneity of vision to demolish and re-construct our concept of the everyday world. Kamber notes also the Cubist shift in emphasis from outer to inner reality: "all that remains important is the finished perfection of mood and tone, the delicate cantilevered tension between polarities, the sudden immobility due to the stress of simultaneous 'readings'"(25). In literature, destruction of the image is accomplished in several ways: through the fusion of one image with another; through the use

of interjected clauses which delay verbs from completing their action; through an unrestricted field of observation creating a reeling focal plane; through "ideological duplicity"--where the sentiments expressed clearly cannot belong to the author; and through a "persistent obscurantism" which consistently denies the reader explicit transitions in the text. Cubist "simultaneity," on the other hand, is created through the mistaking of one object or aspect for another; through the superimposition of objects upon other objects just as the latter is taking shape; with the "double entente" and with elaborate punning. Kamber suggests that in writing as in painting, each Cubist fragment produces its own minor reaction in the text, a feature which lends these texts their "patchwork" quality (Kamber 45-50).

For Kamber, Jacob's "kaleidoscopic reeling from focal plane to focal plane" is generated through the realization of several levels of significance in his poetry. It is this which he believes confers a manner of Cubist "iridescence" to the overall texture of Jacob's work. He notes in Jacob a continual alteration in focus from larger, external objects to smaller, internal ones resulting in a corresponding intensification of meaning from the external and banal to the internal and subtle. It is interesting to note here that it is precisely Kamber's term, the "intensification of meaning" which Perloff excludes from her notion of Cubist writing (Kamber 58). Thus, while for Kamber Cubist art is one of total interpretation reflecting the daily perceptual tensions of life, for Perloff, conversely, it excludes and limits the possibility of complex signification. Perloff's conclusion, however, raises the question of whether one can ever entirely dispose of external referents without rendering a work completely incomprehensible. Certainly, as Kamber notes, Cubism operates through a clash of contradictory messages, but this is the result not so much of an absence of referents as it is of the confusion created by a poetic

texture which appears "overrich, bizarre, contradictory" (52). Maurice Raynal, a prominent Cubist theoretician, certainly recognized the figurative nature of Cubism when he wrote:

The true picture will constitute an individual object, which will possess an existence of its own apart from the subject that has inspired it . . . it will be a work of art, it will be an object . . . better still, it will be a kind of formula; to put it more strongly, a word. In fact it will be, to the objects it represents, what a word is to the object it signifies; and we know well what art is contained in words, with their variety, their richness, their colour or their sobriety (qtd. in Fry, Cubism 152-53).

It is well to remember that Cubist painting never completely dispenses with some form of representation; it never becomes fully-fledged abstract art. Instead, the Cubist effect is created out of a perceived friction between internal and external reference, a tension central also to Woolf. For Kamber, what is essential to Cubist writing is not so much the subject matter employed or the grammatical rules broken, but the recorded attempt to articulate a new type of vision and then to find "an appropriate way to exteriorize that vision, a new type of intelligible experience in art" (10).

Because he opts for a more conceptual rather than a rigidly linguistic approach, Kamber's analysis of Max Jacob is more flexible in the routes it takes towards Cubist translation. It offers a number of possible Cubist approaches based not only on grammar, but also on theme, poetic texture, verbal devices and philosophy. In doing so, it assumes, as I do, that examining any of these elements in isolation gives us only half the story--particularly in the case of Cubism, where technique and polemic were always inextricably intertwined. In the last measure, I must concur with Gray when he writes: "The affinity

between the painting and the poetry of the Cubist movement does not lie in a common technical means--for after all, the processes of visual representation of painting cannot be directly adapted to the written word--but rather in a common set of ideas about aesthetic problems" (100).

vi. Woolf, Painting and the Post-Impressionists

While Woolf was not a Cubist in the same self-conscious manner as Gertrude Stein or Guillaume Apollinaire, she nevertheless frequently identified her own literary motivations with the wider ones of her generation. Textual and biographical evidence shows that Woolf had encountered Cubist works and ideas early in her writing career, while her involvement in the Bloomsbury group gave her a central place in the burgeoning aesthetic avant-garde in England. In particular, her close relationship with her sister, the painter Vanessa Bell, and later with Roger Fry--at the time England's foremost connoisseur of the modern European painters--meant that Woolf was always well versed in the current aesthetic issues at stake in the visual arts. Fry's Omega Workshops, for example, in which Bell was an active participant, show clear instances of Cubist influence. More importantly, Woolf was a first-hand witness to the furor that took place in 1910 and 1912 over the introduction of Cézanne, Matisse, and Picasso to England; events significant enough to provoke her notorious declaration that December, 1910 was the date when "human character changed."¹¹

Human character changed because our way of seeing it changed. No longer an objective whole, modern artists were saying, character was now victim to the fragmentary, erratic vagaries of perception as well as to the distortions of time and space. Interestingly enough, Woolf used this event in

the visual arts to anticipate what she predicted would be the coming of one of the great ages in English literature, for: "when human relations change there is at the same time a change in religion, conduct, politics, and literature" ("Bennett" 92). Woolf took on the voice of the modern artistic collectivity when she said of the literary techniques of the late Victorians, "those tools are not our tools, and that business is not our business. For us those conventions are ruin, those tools are death" ("Bennett" 104). In order to achieve the goal of the new art, moreover, Woolf warned in the same essay that we would need to tolerate "the spasmodic, the obscure, the fragmentary, the failure," claiming that she found all round her "in poems and novels and biographies, even in newspaper articles and essays, the sound of breaking and falling, crashing and destruction" (108). Woolf's apocalyptic temper and sense of cultural "Zeitgeist"--if the expression is not too outdated--is not unlike the manifestoing statements made in Europe by the Cubists, Futurists and Dadaists. As Juan Gris was to write one year later: "Cubism is not a manner but an aesthetic, and even a state of mind; it is therefore inevitably connected with every manifestation of contemporary thought. It is possible to invent a technique or a manner independently, but one cannot invent the whole complexity of a state of mind" (qtd. in Chipp 277). Woolf critic Mark Hussey affirms her place in the eye of the modernist storm, maintaining that "even had Woolf never heard the names of, say, Cézanne, Kandinsky, Matisse, Debussy, or Mallarmé, their influence would have touched her deeply. In fact, she was in an excellent position from which to view the sweeping changes wrought by the European modernist movements" (61).

From early on Woolf showed an ability to analyze the components of visual art, to "read" it, as it were. Making notes on a fresco by Perugino in 1908, long before her real career as a novelist was underway, she was already

drawing the kinds of inter-artistic parallels that would become the trademark of her writing:

I conceive that he saw things grouped, contained in certain and invariable forms; expressed in faces, actions--which did not exist; all beauty was contained in the momentary appearance of human beings. He saw it sealed as it were . . . Each part has a dependence upon the other; they compose one idea in his mind. That idea has nothing to do with anything that can be put into words. A group stands without relation to the figure of God. They have come together then because their lines and colours are related, and express some view of beauty in his brain. . . . I attain a different kind of beauty, achieve symmetry by means of infinite discords, showing all the traces of the mind's passage through the world; achieve in the end, some kind of whole made of shivering fragments; to me this seems the natural process; the flight of the mind. Do they really teach the same thing? (qtd. in Bell, Virginia Woolf 1: 138)

Here, Woolf is already toying with the basic foundation of a Cubist aesthetic. She notes, for instance, the fresco's conceptuality "expressed in faces, actions--which did not exist"; its emphasis on form over content: "they have come together because their lines and colours are related"; its symmetry in a discord of "shivering fragments"; and finally its elevation of process over final message: "showing all the traces of the mind's passage through the world."

It is interesting that in spite of the clear and pervasive influence of painting in her writing, Woolf's personal comments on painting and the Post-Impressionists are frequently cool and stand-offish. At the time of the First

Post-Impressionist exhibition in 1910, for example, she wrote to Violet Dickinson:

Now that Clive [Bell] is in the van of aesthetic opinion, I hear a great deal about pictures. I don't think them so good as books. But why all the Duchesses are insulted by the post-impressionists, a modest sample of painters, innocent even of indecency, I cant [sic] conceive. However, one mustn't say that they are like other pictures, only better, because that makes everyone angry. (L1: 440)

At one point Woolf even predicted "the complete rout of post-impressionism, chiefly because Roger, who has been staying with us, is now turning to literature, and says pictures only do to look at about four times" (L2: 77-78). At the risk of over-psychoanalyzing, it should be noted that Woolf had a history of being defensive and critical of artists and authors she felt threatened by. By nature competitive and often jealous of other artist's achievements--her sister was no exception--Woolf often made an excellent case study in the anxiety of influence. Her strong rejection of Joyce's Ulysses, for example, was concurrent with the writing of Mrs Dalloway, a novel whose Joycean influence has often been noted by critics.¹² Gertrude Stein too was criticized, although there are instances where Woolf's syntax clearly exhibits her influence as well.¹³ Woolf partially admits this tendency in a letter to Ethel Smyth in 1931: "the fact about contemporaries (I write hand to mouth) is that they're doing the same thing on another railway line: one resents their distracting one, flashing past, the wrong way--something like that: from timidity, partly, one keeps ones eyes on one's own road" (L4: 315)

In her book on the sister arts of Vanessa Bell and Virginia Woolf, Diane Filby Gillespie calls Woolf a "raider"--a term adopted from Woolf herself as

she applied it to Walter Sickert--meaning one who borrows from the artistic territory of another in order to define his/her own medium (1). Woolf in fact often worked in tandem with Bell, who made woodcuts and illustrations for many of her book jackets and stories. Interestingly enough, Woolf did her writing in the same way as a painter--standing, using a tall desk in imitation of her sister's easel (D1: 246, n 17). As well, Bloomsbury discussions on aesthetics often centered on the question of the interrelation of the arts. In 1918 Woolf wrote in her diary: "we discuss prose; and as usual some book is had out, and I have to read a passage over his [Fry's] shoulder. Theories are fabricated. Pictures stood on chairs" (D1: 225).

Woolf frequently turned to painting for inspiration when her own ideas, or the ideas of her fellow writers, seemed colourless or insipid. Indeed, she often used painterly terminology in order to describe her work. In 1917 she records: "we discussed literature and aesthetics . . . I said one could, and certainly did, write with phrases, not only words . . . Roger asked me if I founded my writing upon texture or upon structure; I connected structure with plot, and therefore said 'texture'" (D1: 80). Colour is also an extremely important element in Woolf's writing. She claimed herself that: "all great writers are great colourists . . . they always contrive to make their scene glow and darken and change to the eye" (E2: 241). Of Conrad she wrote "picture after picture he painted thus upon the dark background" (E1: 305); and on finishing Mrs Dalloway she compared her method of revision to that of a painter, as "thus one works with a wet brush over the whole, and joins parts separately composed and gone dry" (D2: 323). Other artistic references, to actions such as "molding"; "shaping" or "sketching" abound in Woolf's private and public writings. Woolf, as one critic has noted: "never forgets the

visual, spatial metaphor involved in speaking of 'point of view' or 'perspective'; they are never merely psychological" (McLaurin 91).

Woolf could reverse these criteria as well. As she wrote to Vanessa Bell in 1927: "all your pictures are built up of flying phrases . . . Your problem will now be to buttress up this lyricism with solidity" (L3: 340-41), while the following year she praised Bell as "a short story writer of great wit" (L3: 498). When Woolf called a painting "literary," however, it was generally meant as insult, not as praise. For her and her clique, "literary" was associated with the sentimental, narrative art upheld by the Royal Academy and against which modern artists had so recently rebelled. In literature, its equivalent was found in the "materialism" of Galsworthy and Bennett.¹⁴ Writing to Bell in 1917 she complained: "I committed myself all wrong to poor old Roger, about his cold hard little compositions and called them literary, which he said they aren't" (L2: 195). With their emphasis on form over content, the Post-Impressionists seemed to have broached a problem that was as yet beyond the grasp of literature. The Cubists, similarly: "attacked the academic dictum that the subject of a painting must deal with an important or noble event, or in any case a narrative or 'literary' one that could be comprehended by the mind" (Chipp 194).

When Woolf was beginning to forge her literary career, the term "artist"--in the sense of being a socially recognized creator of aesthetic objects--was as yet an accolade awarded only to painters; yet if Woolf was to enter into an artistic community, she would demand that it be under the same banner. To Violet Dickinson she once wrote: "pictures are easier to understand than subtle literature, so I think I shall become an artist to the public, and keep my writing to myself" (L1: 170). Influenced in part by notions such as Clive Bell's "significant form."¹⁵ Woolf felt strongly about the status of her writings as

works of art and felt they should stand autonomously just as paintings did. In this respect, Fry proved a far better, more reliable guide than Bell. In his essay "Some Questions in Aesthetics," he wrote:

Even in the novel, which as a rule has pretensions to being a work of art, the structure may be so loose, the esthetic effects may be produced by so vast an accumulation of items that the temptation for the artist to turn aside from his purpose and interpolate criticisms of life, of manners or morals, is very strong. Comparatively few novelists have ever conceived of the novel as a single perfectly organic aesthetic whole. . . . (Transformations 7)

Fry claimed also that, "the purpose of literature is the creation of structures which have for us the feeling of reality . . . These structures are self-contained, self-sufficing, and not to be valued by their references to what lies outside" (qtd. in Dowling, Bloomsbury 18). Statements such as this bear direct comparison with those of the Cubists; Gleizes and Metzinger, for example: "the picture bears its pretext, the reason for its existence, within it. You may carry a picture with impunity from a church to a drawingroom, from a museum to your study. Essentially independent, necessarily complete . . . it does not harmonize with this or that environment; it harmonizes with things in general, with the universe: it is an organism" (qtd. in Chipp 210).

Fry's discussions of literature between 1916 and 1920 provided Woolf with many of the incentives for crafting Jacob's Room. In 1925 she had wanted to dedicate To the Lighthouse to him, and in 1927 she praised him, saying "you have kept me on the right path, as far as writing goes, more than anyone" (L3: 385). It has been suggested that Woolf and Fry's idea of a great work of art share two main criteria: first, an authentic vision which the artist

feels compelled to express; and second, a unique form of expressing this vision particular to the vision itself (Proudfit 180).

Fry's influence may in fact have inadvertently led Woolf toward a Cubist aesthetic; he came close to making this very comparison in one article, "Modern French Art at the Mansard Gallery" which he wrote for The Athenaeum in 1919. Discussing current trends in modern art, Fry argues for a division based on two main streams of influence: one Cubist and the other Naturalist. His estimation of Cubism, in this case, has some accuracy:

The Cubists tend . . . to introduce at some point a complete break of connection between ordinary vision and the constructed pictorial vision. They may be highly realistic in detail, but internal necessities of design dictate the relations of the parts "de novo," and not, as with the Naturalists, by a continued gradual distorting pressure upon the relations presented by ordinary vision. (724)

This "complete break," Fry then argues, has led in turn to a new kind of "literary painting" where: "ideas, symbolized by forms, could be juxtaposed, contrasted and combined almost as they can be by words on a page" (724). Fry finds the painter Survage to be the greatest example of the possibilities of this Cubist impulse. The article becomes more interesting, however, as Fry suggests ways in which "modern literature is approximating to the same kind of relationship of ideas as Survage's pictures give us." He then proceeds, somewhat ludicrously, to "translate" one of Survage's paintings into words, which he does in the form of a descriptive paragraph; at the end of this he concludes:

I see, now, that I have done it, that it was meant for Mrs Virginia Woolf--that Survage is almost precisely the same thing in paint

that Mrs Virginia Woolf is in prose. Only I like intensely such sequences of ideas presented to me in Mrs Virginia Woolf's prose, and as yet I have a rather strong distaste for Surville's visual statements. . . . Of course Picasso himself has never become literary; indeed, in his Cubist work he is more purely plastic and less literary than he was in his early naturalistic days, and the main tradition of French Cubism remains severely formal. (724)

In his Rede lecture delivered shortly after Woolf's death, E.M. Forster claimed that To the Lighthouse gives the pleasure "only art can give" ("Virginia Woolf" 256). At the same time, however, Forster questioned Woolf's ability to create convincing characters (258). The author's mixed praise is often considered a response to a challenge made by Woolf years earlier over the question of literary aesthetics. In her essay "The Art of Fiction," Woolf had in fact accused Forster of quite the opposite offense:

Strange though this unesthetic attitude would be in the critic of any other art, it does not surprise us in the critic of fiction. . . . How are we to take a stick and point to that tone, that relation, in the vanishing pages, as Mr Roger Fry points with his wand at a line or a colour in the picture displayed before him? . . . And so while the painter, the musician, and the poet come in for their share of criticism, the novelist goes unscathed. . . . There is not a critic alive now who will say that a novel is a work of art and that as such he will judge it. (E2: 54-55)

Woolf, what is more, sees the lack of a developed literary aesthetic as a national characteristic, and suggests that English writers might turn to their European counterparts for inspiration:

In England at any rate the novel is not a work of art. . . . In France and Russia they take fiction seriously. . . . If the English critic were less domestic, less assiduous to protect the rights of what it pleases him to call life, the novelist might be bolder too. He might cut adrift from the eternal tea-table and the plausible and preposterous formulas which are supposed to represent the whole of our human adventure. But then the story might wobble; the plot might crumble; ruin might seize upon the characters. The novel, in short, might become a work of art. (E2: 55)

In Woolf's writing, painting often has two main functions: it is a source of imagery and analogy and it is also a metaphor for the writing process itself. Marianna Torgovnick has argued that "the influence [of the visual arts] on Woolf is more profound than anything found in Henry James and vaguer but equally important as in D.H. Lawrence" (Pictorialism 65). She believes that a knowledge of modern art is key to a comprehensive reading of Woolf: "her deepest, most basic sense of art was of the art championed by Bloomsbury and practiced by her sister--twentieth century art, rooted in the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists and advancing eagerly into Cubism, abstraction and other innovations" (62).

Torgovnick divides the relationship between writers and the visual arts into four major types: the decorative, biographic, ideological, and interpretive. She finds instances of all these types in Woolf's writing. The decorative represents the smallest degree of involvement possible, and is found in passages of description which use metaphors or allusions with a clear link to the visual arts. The biographic mode more directly involves the critic, who may create analogies between references in the author's work and actual

external elements affecting that work. Woolf's relationships with Vanessa Bell or Roger Fry are a good example of this kind of external reference. The ideological, on the other hand, implies a use of the visual arts that embodies major themes in the fiction, particularly its views on politics, history, society or "reality." This may, as with Woolf, result in a theory of fiction--but it may also be didactic, where units of the novel assume ideological import they did not have in their original visual source. One variation on the ideological is the iconographic, where motifs common in paintings are used in writing. Torgovnick finds this device particularly prevalent in Woolf: her use of the window paradigm or the image of the light on the sea are both good examples. Indeed, Woolf herself wrote in 1918 that "only pictures that appeal to my plastic sense of words make me want to have them for still life in my novel" (D1: 168). Finally, the interpretive mode involves the description of the way characters in a novel experience art objects. A subdivision of this category is the hermeneutic, a mode also common in Woolf, where references to the visual arts create possible sources of meaning for the reader, as with Lily's painting in To the Lighthouse or the essay "Three Pictures" (E4: 151-54). These categories suggest ways in which we can begin to speak further about the Cubist elements in Woolf's work, which, I will argue, are present pictorially in all these modes.

Sharon Spencer in Space, Time and Structure in the Modern Novel uses Cubism as a heuristic device to describe the development of what she calls the "architectonic novel" of the twentieth century. Noting the concurrent development of both styles, Spencer writes: "the newness of architectonic novels, like that of Cubist paintings, is not essential but structural; it is the result of the artist's desire to reveal hitherto unnoticed aspects of the subject's reality" (173). Spencer notes three general characteristics that relate the

architectonic, "open-structured" novel to the structure of Cubism. These include: a multiplication of perspectives, accomplished through narrational or visual points of view; literary quotation; illustration or a mixing literary styles; a deliberate rejection of the novel's "frame"--that is, the literary conventions that distinguish the novel from its surrounding context of reality; and finally, the exploration within the novel of the processes by which it came into being, questioning the boundary between art and life (52-3). All of these characteristics are key elements to Woolf's work. They may also be considered the general basis for a Cubist approach to reading her novels.

2. Cézanne, the Early Stories

If no relation of direct influence can be found between Woolf and Cubism, then it is certainly possible to find definite points of intersection at which their respective interests merge, cross, or coincide. Cézanne is one such important link in that his art holds special import to the aesthetic development of both Woolf and Cubism. Today, Cézanne is still seen as the direct precursor and instigator of the Cubist movement and study of his work sheds light on some of the most important innovations of these painters. Woolf, on the other hand, is linked to Cézanne primarily through her relationship with Roger Fry, who, through his Post-Impressionist exhibitions and critical writings, promoted Cézanne as the greatest master of the modern movement. Not only was Woolf well versed in these works and events, she also took an active part in the critical discussions on Cézanne and the modern painters that regularly took place within the confines of Bloomsbury. If Cubism found part of its impetus in Cézanne's aesthetic then, Woolf also had direct access to this same source.

While much has been made of Roger Fry's influence on Woolf's writing, it is also true that her opinions often diverged from his, particularly regarding literature. In 1940 she finished her biography of Fry, in which she wrote:

As a critic of literature . . . he was not what is called a safe guide. He looked at the carpet from the wrong side; but he made it for that very reason display unexpected patterns. And many of his theories held good for both arts. Design, rhythm, texture--there they were again--in Flaubert as in Cézanne. And he would hold

up a book to the light as if it were a picture and show where in his view--it was a painter's of course--it fell short. (Roger Fry 240)

While Fry builds on the more formalist strain in Cézanne, I would argue that Woolf, like the Europeans, interprets him Cubistically. This difference is visible also if we compare Fry's painting and Woolf's writing within the context of their own respective mediums. To be sure, Fry is remembered more today for his art criticism than for his painting, and it has been a point of frequent interest among critics that, on the whole, the influence of formalism, Cézanne and Post-Impressionism in Bloomsbury produced far better literature than it did painting (Twitchell 189).

Woolf believed profoundly in the aesthetic interrelation of the arts. That a painter can influence a writer was, for her, perfectly natural. She claimed in 1925, that "were all modern paintings to be destroyed, a critic of the twenty-fifth century would be able to deduce from the works of Proust alone the existence of Matisse, Cézanne, Derain and Picasso"; with those books before him, the critic would know, "that painters of the highest originality and power must be covering canvas after canvas, squeezing tube after tube, in the room next door."¹⁶ Woolf had read a biography of Cézanne (Gillespie 45) and, appreciating the complexity of his art, had once called him "a miracle" (Dowling, Bloomsbury 97). Woolf's admiration for Cézanne arises out of an understanding of a common set of aesthetic problems involving style, form and content (Twitchell 185). In the autobiographical Moments of Being, for example, she wrote: "if one could give a sense of my mother's personality one would have to be an artist. It would be as difficult to do that, as it should be done, as to paint a Cézanne" (85).

Roger Fry admired Cézanne because he found in him an architectonic insistence on form and design that had always seemed to be lacking in the

Impressionists. He admired Cézanne for being an artist who based his work on control rather than intuition, who was hardworking, vigorous, unallusive and timeless (Harrison 52). For Fry, Cézanne was the father of modern painting, the precursor to Picasso and the Cubists, and as such was inherently superior to them. The opening paragraph of Fry's monograph of Cézanne, written in 1927, immediately establish this:

Of all the changes that have affected the art of painting during the present century, the most revolutionary has been brought about by the influence of Cézanne. Cézanne is the forerunner and unconscious innovator of what has come to be known as Cubism, a doctrine which he implanted in men's minds when he made his famous utterance that "all forms in nature can be reduced to the sphere, the cone, and the cylinder." (9)

Fry then goes on to dismiss Cubism as an "artificial stylization," an art form which misinterpreted Cézanne by overstepping the bounds of abstraction. Cubism, he believes, came about at a time when art had been "devitalized" by the struggles that took place between the authority of the Old Masters and the rebellion of the Naturalist and Impressionist movements (Cézanne 10). Fry felt Cubism to be a "reductio ad absurdum" too bound by restrictive theory and mechanics: "art cannot be reduced to a question of mechanics. Dogma in art is the prop of second-rate minds" (20). Fry's suspicion of Cubism is the result of both his wariness of total abstraction and his misconstruing of its basic aims. In an article written in 1919, for example, Fry claimed that "Braque, Juan Gris, Severini, Maria Blanchard and all the rest, create forms which have no direct associations with ideas" ("Modern" 724). Still, Fry had met Picasso and expressed great admiration for his work, an event which Woolf makes mention of in his biography:

He visited Picasso; and was amazed by his work. "It's astonishing stuff. Rather what I hoped might be coming. Vast pink nudes in boxes. Almost monochrome pinkish red flesh and pure grey fonds which enclose it. They're larger than life and vast in all directions and tremendously modelled on academic lines almost. They're most impressive almost overwhelming things . . . he goes and does things which disconcert everyone. . . . He's always chucking his reputations." (219-20)

While Fry stood alone in understanding what French artists were doing long before the rest of English society, his ignorance of Cubism becomes, nevertheless, a major chink in his critical armor.

If Cubism was the European response to Cézanne, in Roger Fry's England he inspired a formalist approach to art, which, ironically, became in subsequent years the dominant critical approach taken to Cubism itself (Falkenheim 99). Fry's own aesthetic is thus tied to Cubism through a common root, and it remains ironic that he failed to note the fundamental similarities between Cubist thinking and his own. As critic Beverly Twitchell has noted:

Cubist and formalist views could not remain separate for long; thoroughly avant-gardist and precisely fitting the evolution of modernism, Cubism shared much with formalism. Indeed, Cubist analyses of Cézanne's paintings not only predate Fry's formalism, they contributed to the actual invention of Cubism and seemed to be the perfect fulfillment of modernist evolutionism. (204)

Fry's public position and somewhat conservative tendencies meant that he placed strong emphasis on traditional artistic values of worth. "Classical," became for him the necessary characteristic of any art which successfully established a harmonious relationship among its structural elements. This may be attributable, in part, to Fry's fears that he would not be able to "sell" the Post-Impressionists to a skeptical British public unless they were seen to have some link to the great art of the past.¹⁷ Falkenheim suggests, therefore, that Fry may have included the Cubist pictures he did in his exhibitions on the ironic grounds that their geometrical patterns, tonal nuances, and restrained colours provided some reassurance that they were informed by an underlying dictum of order (25).

Like the Cubists, Fry admired Cézanne's organization of volumes into a tightly organized space which acknowledged the self-contained character of the two-dimensional picture surface (Falkenheim 101). Fry was in fact far more willing to tolerate abstraction in Cézanne than in any other painter he dealt with. Cézanne, unlike the Impressionists, emphasized the problem of representation over the problem of sensation (Sypher 263); his paintings, Fry argued, did not imitate form, but rather created it in works which could stand as autonomous wholes. Cézanne promised also the possibility of a move toward a non-figurative art which emphasized form above content and which would turn away from misleading "associated ideas."

Fry and the Cubists were also alike in looking to Cézanne for his formal strengths and innovative treatment of space. For the Cubists, the primary issue here was the reconciliation of the illusion of volume and solidity with the truth of the two-dimensional picture plane. Cézanne had portrayed the passage of light in a way which also seemed to express the massiveness of objects; he managed to give a sense of movement while maintaining the

illusion of static forms. Thus, while the Impressionists focused on the literal transcription of perception, Cézanne introduced a way of seeing objects which was highly conceptual: a characteristic typical of his tilted table-tops, opening of contours and flattening of ellipses (Rubin 162). But while conceptuality in art was by no stretch of the imagination an innovation, Cézanne was the first to locate the status of the work of art within the very process of conception. Writes critic William Rubin: "while Picasso was the first consciously to emphasize the painting process as an experience for the viewer, it was Cézanne's new way of composing a painting that made the drama of pictorial integration--the mosaic of decisions that determine its becoming a work of art--a subject for art itself" (189). This is perhaps one of the main differences between Cézanne and the Cubists: that where the latter saw the indeterminate interplay of planes as the object of composition, for Cézanne it was the illusionistic synthesis of these planes on which our focus must be directed (Steiner, "Limits" 144). Even in the "Synthetic" phase of Cubism, process is still valued over the sense of completion and closure found in Cézanne.

It is this difference, in effect, which I believe differentiates Virginia Woolf's early stories from her more mature novels. By the time her first book of stories, Monday or Tuesday was written and published in 1921, Woolf was well acquainted with Cézanne and with the work of Cubists such as Braque and Picasso. Since most of these stories are extremely short and quite focused in terms of their subject matter, it is useful to examine a few of them in order to gain a sense of the developing aesthetic concerns of Woolf's early writing and how this can be profitably understood in the light of Cubism.

The subject-matter of the stories Woolf wrote between 1917 and 1921, like that of early modern paintings, tends to be based on an appeal to "an ordinary mind on an ordinary day" ("Modern Fiction" 149). Woolf chooses

simple objects which seemed resistant to romanticization or grandiloquence, where, according to Jonathan Quick: "the self-sufficing occasion for the imagination's exploration of its own rightness, intricacy and depth, [is] free of foregone conclusions" ("Post-Impressionism" 561). Pieces like "The Mark on the Wall," "Kew Gardens," or "Blue & Green" have the quality of sketches which emphasize ways of depicting the process of perception.¹⁸ They might in fact more properly be called "vignettes" rather than "stories," since in them, by and large, it is difficult to determine any real sequence of narrative "events." Instead, writes Quick, "there is a conspicuous attempt to create a rhythmic spatial relation of images--what Fry referred to as 'planes of thought and feeling' in the poems of Mallarmé; this relation is never conventionally thematic but is rather the result of a deliberate compositional 'design' of the images themselves" (561). In the companion compositions "Blue & Green," for example, we are presented with a series of disparate images unrelated thematically but tied together by their colour--thus making form literally a function of colour. In its original printing, the story actually presented the description of the two colours facing each other on opposite pages, in the same manner in which we would look at two paintings hung side by side on a wall. Indeed, blue and green were colours which Woolf seems to have generally associated with the Post-Impressionists. In 1912 she wrote to Violet Dickinson: "the Grafton, thank God, is over; artists are an abominable race. The furious excitement of these people all the winter over their pieces of canvas coloured green and blue, is odious."¹⁹

"Kew Gardens" is an experiment in point of view, dealing as it does with the intersection of different planes of consciousness and perception on a given day. The story does not have conventional narrative continuity in that none of the several characters introduced in it remain in the story from

beginning to end. Instead, we must seek coherence in the overlapping pattern of relations created through the merging and falling apart of consciousnesses. The French critic Jean Guiget, for one, applies what might be called a Cubist/Cézannist reading to this story:

This piece of garden with its flowers, its strollers, is shattered into a thousand fragments and yet the countless cracks and lines that separate them have not entirely destroyed the accustomed pattern: we recognize all the familiar objects and elements. . . . But the outline, momentarily grasped, vanishes a minute later, swallowed up by a crack across a neighboring object. Stability, solidity, permanence become dubious; as the eye traces an imagined arabesque through this mosaic, the mind regroups fresh wholes in this atomized universe, breaks habitual links and associations to form others, hitherto unnoticed or neglected. (215-16)

However, unlike some of the more Cubist novels, "Kew Gardens" is based more on a notion of seamlessness and circularity than on fragmentation and disruption. Indeed, as a text operating through a high degree of metaphorical extension, it actually works nicely in the context of Jakobson's formulations discussed earlier. And, while it does exhibit some of the multiplicity of perspectives found in Cézanne and Cubism, it does not impart the same kind of radical questioning of that experience found in the latter.

"A Haunted House" also experiments with a moving perspective like that in "Kew Gardens." Passing through a house inhabited by a ghostly couple, we gain a sense of plastic volume and spatial movement that Quick has compared to a Cézanne painting ("Post Impressionism" 562-63). One passage in particular provides a pictorially decorative evocation of a Cézanne

still-life: "The window panes reflected apples, reflected roses; all the leaves were free in the glass. If they moved in the drawing-room, the apple only turned its yellow side. Yet, the moment after, if the door was opened, spread about the floor, hung upon the walls, pendant from the ceiling--what?" (122). The passage may in fact have been influenced by an earlier experience Woolf had had with a Cézanne painting, which she records in her diary in 1918:

There are 6 apples in the Cézanne picture. What can 6 apples not be? I began to wonder. There's their relationship to each other, and their colour, and their solidity. To Roger and Nessa, moreover, it was a far more intricate question than this. It was a question of pure paint or mixed; if pure which colour; emerald or veridian; and then the laying on of the paint; and the time he'd spent; and how he'd altered it, and why, and when he painted it--We carried it into the next room and Lord! how it showed up the pictures there, as if you put a real stone among sham ones. . . . The apples positively got redder and rounder and greener. I suspect some very mysterious quality . . . in that picture. (D1: 140)

"The Mark on the Wall" alters the focus of these stories slightly towards an examination of the processes of perception. It is perhaps the best example of a group of tales including "Solid Objects," "The New Dress," and "An Unwritten Novel" which begin with an undefined, ambiguous visual stimulus which is then interpreted through what Woolf would call a "building up" process.²⁰ Here, the narrator speculates on the identity of a small black mark on the wall above his or her mantelpiece, whose ambiguous identity contrasts with the precise description of its location and surroundings. Each hypothesis of the mark's identity posed by the narrator is

followed by a lengthy diatribe which gets further and further away from the subject at hand before it abruptly returns to the original question. In this way, Woolf creates physical and mental ambiguities of depth and volume out of a surface which ultimately remains static. The mark thus appears first as a hole, then as a flat surface, but then the narrator finds that "in certain lights that mark on the wall seems actually to project from the wall" (86). Like many of Woolf's stories, "The Mark on the Wall" is a highly visual work, a point evidenced by Woolf's frequent use of iconographic language in it: "there will be nothing but spaces of light and dark, intersected by thick stalks, and rather higher up perhaps, rose-shaped blots of an indistinct colour--dim pinks and blues--which will, as time goes on, become more definite, become--I don't know what" (84).

A tension is thus set up in the story between our desire for a solid "satisfying sense of reality," and our fear of the abstract and indeterminate, the sense that "everything's moving, falling, slipping, vanishing. . . . There is a vast upheaval of matter" (89) on the other. During the course of the story, the narrator comes increasingly to question the conventional ordering of experience as it is found in science and philosophy. For him or her, our attempt to avoid a "collision with reality" is merely "Nature . . . at her old game of self-preservation" (88). Avoidance, moreover, is an extremely seductive proposition--for as the narrator finds, all s/he wants is "to think quietly, calmly, spaciouly, never to be interrupted, never to have to rise from my chair, to slip easily from one thing to another without any sense of hostility, or obstacle. I want to sink deeper, away from the surface, with its hard separate facts. To steady myself, let me catch hold of the first idea that passes" (85). The narrator's own yearnings, however, are ironically

undermined by the very form of the story, as this pleasant scenario is rapidly overtaken by a more radical sense of uncertainty:

Suppose the looking-glass smashes, the image disappears, and the romantic figure with the green of forest depths all about it is there no longer, but only that shell of a person which is seen by other people--what an airless, shallow, bald, prominent world it becomes! A world not to be lived in. As we face each other in omnibuses and underground railways we are looking into the mirror; and that accounts for the vagueness, the gleam of glassiness, in our eyes. And the novelists in future will realise more and more the importance of these reflections, for of course there is not one reflection but an almost infinite number; those are the depths they will explore . . . leaving the description of reality more and more out of their stories. (85-86)

This self-reflexivity, in which content becomes a function of form, is typical both of Woolf's later work as well as of Cubist painting. A good example occurs in the conversation recorded in the narratorial digression of the second paragraph: "and he was in process of saying that in his opinion art should have ideas behind it when we were torn asunder, as one is torn from the old lady about to pour out tea and the young man about to hit the tennis ball in the back garden of the suburban villa as one rushes past in the train" (83). Clearly, the "ideas" in art that the narrator refers to are embedded in the narrative of the very story itself, making the abrupt ending of the sentence an ironic commentary on this fundamental problem of the text. In this light, the lighthearted resolution of the story--that the mark on the wall was a snail--must be taken with some trepidation, for clearly it impairs some of the more pressing philosophical questions raised in the text, such as when the narrator

asserts: "No, no, nothing is proved, nothing is known. And if I were to get up at this very moment and ascertain that the mark on the wall is really--what shall I say? . . . what should I gain? Knowledge? Matter for further speculation? . . . And what is knowledge?" (87).

A key clue to this evasion lies in the short dialogue immediately preceding the identification of the snail, where a stranger on his way to buy a newspaper complains of the current state of war to the narrator: "Curse this war; God damn this war! . . . All the same, I don't see why we should have a snail on our wall" (89). If, as we shall see in Jacob's Room and To the Lighthouse, war is perceived as the ultimate irrationality of man, the final loss of order, then it is clear why the narrator feels s/he must make a declaration of which s/he can feel assured. The narrator is, in the end, victim to his or her own philosophical ruminations, for ultimately the stranger's connecting clause: "all the same" does not follow from what came before it; the two statements bear no logical, causal relation to each other, just as war bears no logical relation to any justification of societal order.

3. Jacob's Room: Impressionism vs. Cubism

Avrom Fleishman has called Jacob's Room a "first attempt to embody the dynamic insubstantiality of character"(46). It is certainly no accident that the novel is called "Jacob's Room" and not "Jacob Flanders," concerned as it is with the limitations of our knowledge of others--a theme emphasized by the two descriptions of Jacob's empty room which metaphorically "frame" his experience as an adult (36; 172). Yet Jacob's room does not act, as we might expect, as a metaphor for Jacob's mind or inner being, but rather for the larger problems of the novel itself in that it is the locus of his presence and absence and hence, of our knowing and not-knowing. "The march of the mind . . . is queer enough," says Woolf's narrator, "yet all the while [it has] for center, for magnet, a young man alone in his room" (92). Like the title of a Cubist painting, Jacob's room acts as the center for his multiplicity, the core around which we try to reconcile the disparate fragments of his life, a symbol of the illusory social self, and, like a Cubist painting, it appears to concomitantly invite and resist definition. In Jacob's Room, as in early Cubist compositions, all the reader/beholder is finally given is the ghost of a three-dimensional presence and the skeleton of its missing co-ordinates (Roskill 68).

Calling Woolf a literary Cubist, however, should also necessitate explaining why she is not an Impressionist--a label which has been applied generally to her writing and often to Jacob's Room. To answer this simply, I believe that at times she is both, but that to see her only as an Impressionist is to deeply misconstrue the larger implications of her work. When Woolf urged modern writers to "record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall" (*Modern Fiction* 150), she was doing more than promoting the Impressionist goal of objectively transcribing the natural

effects of light and colour in a given place and time. The "myriad impressions" that the mind receives are not only sensory, but intellectual and emotional as well. What interests the modern writer, Woolf wrote in the same essay, "lies very likely in the dark places of psychology" (152), places, in other words, that cannot be penetrated through the superficial rendering of appearances.

Of course, many have read Jacob's Room as exactly this--a novel which speaks of the futility of penetrating surfaces and which is less interested in its ostensible subject--Jacob--than in the self-conscious display of style and lyrical description of the passing scene. Woolf was certainly aware of Roger Fry's dislike of Impressionism, a movement whose importance he acknowledged but whose lack of intellectual and formal rigor he criticized. By coining the term "Post-Impressionist" in 1910 Fry had self-consciously laid stress on what he saw as the inauguration of a new artistic era that would go beyond the concerns of Impressionism. In her essay, "Life and the Novelist," Woolf alludes to the insufficiency of a writing style based solely on the transcription of impressions. She sees two basic processes in the formation of a work of art: perception and selection. Yet of these two process "the first--to receive impressions--is undoubtedly the easier, the simpler, and the more pleasant," since the novelist "can no more cease to receive impressions than a fish in mid-ocean can cease to let the water run through . . . s gills" (E2: 131-32). In order for the artist to "create," however, this raw material of art must be tempered into a new design:

. . . if this sensibility is one of the conditions of the novelist's life, it is obvious that all writers whose books survive have known how to master it and make it serve their purposes. . . . They have mastered their perceptions, hardened them and changed

them into the fabrics of their art. So drastic is the process of selection--that in its final state we can find no trace of the actual scene upon which the chapter was based. For in that solitary room, whose door the critics are for ever trying to unlock, processes of the strangest kind are gone through. (E2: 132)

Finally, writes Woolf: "there emerges from the mist something stark, something formidable and enduring, the bone and substance upon which our rash or indiscriminating emotion was founded" (E2: 132). James Hafley emphatically concurs that Woolf, "was not simply an Impressionist, a person with nothing to say who said it beautifully, but a serious artist whose main purpose in her novels was to convey a unified vision of life and experience."²¹

Carl Grabo, an early critic of Woolf, saw Jacob's Room as a failed experiment in Impressionism, rightly judging that "Impressionism in narrative [is] a technical method whose possibilities extend only to details, to contributory effects" (304). Like many after him, Grabo found Jacob's Room "a fatiguing book," noting that:

Attention is distracted and strained amid so many characters so slightly sketched and with no more than a descriptive purpose. The transitions in time and place exact an incessant reorientation which is wearying. (300)

Another problem:

. . . too elastic a use of the point of view is another matter. We are frequently unsure in Jacob's Room whether we view the character from within or without, whether as invisible spectator we identify ourselves with the author or with the character. (301)

Grabo's mistaken conception of Woolf's goals and technique are the grounds for his rejection of the novel. Nevertheless, his criticism reveals more about the ideas at work in Jacob's Room than he seems to have realized. The Impressionist analogy, I would argue, is incompatible with Grabo's use of adjectives such as "distracted," "strained" and "wearying" to describe the text. In a very basic way, Impressionist paintings are none of these things. Rather, they provide a fleeting glance at the unity of the moment and not an "incessant reorientation" in time and space. Nor do Impressionist works have "elastic" points of view; quite the contrary: we are always certain from what specific angle or point of view subject matter is being observed. As I shall argue, the experience of a Cubist painting is far more appropriate to the kind of mental effort Grabo describes above.

Jack Stewart, another champion of the Impressionist aesthetic in Jacob's Room, believes that it is Woolf's "commitment to perception and sensation" both in this novel and the ones before it that tie her to Impressionism.²² Indeed, many of the characteristics Stewart cites as "Impressionistic" might also fit into a Cubist aesthetic. He notes, for example, Woolf's use of "semi-transparent" images; of descriptions that give more detail than could possibly be perceived from a single vantage point; and an emphasis on elusiveness, rather than the fulfillment of being ("Impressionism," *passim*).

Stewart's analysis is not so much incorrect as incomplete, and perhaps what it most clearly demonstrates is the similarity of the fundamental premises from which Impressionism, Cubism and other Post-Impressionist movements emerged. Still, there exist basic differences as well, and the disadvantage of the Impressionist analogy here, I believe, is that it closes off more avenues for discussion of Jacob's Room than it opens up. In effect, it does not and cannot show us anything other than the obvious descriptive

lyricism of Woolf's style, thus by-passing the complex interiority that Jacob's Room so clearly depends on. The profit that can be gained through a Cubist reading is in exploring how the novel makes use of the visual arts within the ideological and interpretive realms.

Impressionism in Jacob's Room is contained within a larger, more Cubistic structure which reveals its Impressionism as a single coherent unit of description within a far more splintered totality. As at least one critic has noted: "the jaggedness of the narrative is deliberate, not a thwarted effort to write a smoothly flowing lyric novel" (Rosenthal 79). Using Torgovnick's terms, the Impressionism of Jacob's Room tends to be decorative or iconographic, although when seen within a Cubist framework it holds a function which is both ideological and interpretive. Women, for example, are described impressionistically in much the same way as scenery. On the first page, for example, Jacob's mother reads a letter through a veil of tears that creates an Impressionistic blurring of detail: "all the dahlias in her garden undulated in red waves and flashed the glass house in her eyes, and spangled the kitchen with bright knives"(3); and when Jacob looks at Clara Durrant he sees her as "semi-transparent, pale, wonderfully beautiful up there among the vine leaves and the yellow and purple bunches, the lights swimming over her in coloured islands" (59). Women seem to possess the transitory, ephemeral beauty of an Impressionist canvas: "Thus if you talk of a beautiful woman you mean only something flying fast which for a second uses the eyes, lips, or cheeks of Fanny Elmer, for example, to glow through" (112); and "as for the beauty of women, it is like the light on the sea, never constant to a single wave. They all have it; they all lose it. Now she is dull and thick as bacon; now as transparent as hanging glass" (111-12). If Woolf associates Impressionism with superficiality, which I think to some degree she does,

then it is appropriate that what almost universally characterizes the women in Jacob's life is their shallowness. Observing Florinda, for instance, Jacob sees in her face something "horribly brainless" (78), for as the narrator tells us resignedly: "beauty goes hand in hand with stupidity" (79).

Men, on the other hand, are descriptively more Cubistic. In the case of Old Professor Huxtable, for example, we see "the whole flesh of his face fall into folds as if props were removed" (37). Jacob's Cambridge chums, convinced of "the clear division between right and wrong" are given in even more striking terms:

Meanwhile behind him the shape they had made, whether by argument or not, the spiritual shape, hard yet ephemeral, as of glass compared with the dark stone of the Chapel, was dashed to splinters, young men rising from chairs and sofa corners, buzzing and barging about the room, one driving another against the bedroom door, which giving way, in they fell. Then Jacob was left there, in the shallow armchair, alone with Masham? Anderson? Simeon? Oh, it was Simeon. The others had all gone. (43)

And again, in one of the only instances where Jacob is physically described by the narrator, we see him "as if a stone were ground to dust; as if white sparks flew from a livid whetstone, which was his spine; as if the switchback railway, having swooped to the depths, fell, fell, fell, This was in his face" (91). In spite of their vibrant physicality, however, the prime of young men, like that of women, is fleeting: "for ever the beauty of young men seems to be set in smoke," mourns the narrator, "however lustily they chase footballs, or drive cricket balls, dance, run, or stride along roads" (114). Impressionism in Jacob's Room then, seems linked to a deceiving simplicity, to a facile concern for

appearance without substance which, to my eyes, is ultimately one of the warnings of the novel. The "irresponsible optimism" of Impressionism might be seen as the ironic source behind Jacob's naïve exclamation: "surely there's enough light in the street at this moment to drown all our cares in gold!" (114).

Writing on Cubism in 1912, Albert Gleizes and Jean Metzinger described the Cubist painting as one which, like Jacob's Room, "surrenders itself slowly, seems always to wait until we interrogate it, as though it reserved an infinity of replies to an infinity of questions" (qtd. in Chipp 215). Gleizes and Metzinger declared the difference between Cubists and Impressionists to be one of intensity; for unlike the Impressionists, they claimed, Cubists rely on more than just their senses to perceive reality: "we seek the essential, but we seek it in our personality and not in a sort of eternity, laboriously divided by mathematicians and philosophers. . . . If so many eyes contemplate an object, there are so many images of that object; if so many minds comprehend it, there are so many essential images" (qtd. in Chipp 214).

Jacob is just such an object--having no existence other than his refracted image in the eyes and minds of the some 160 characters that appear in the 173 pages of Jacob's Room. We approach him through letters, books, phone calls, girlfriends, mothers, strangers and friends, and yet he still remains elusive. Mrs Norman, for example, sees him as "nice, handsome, interesting, distinguished, well built" (28); Mrs Durrant calls him "extremely awkward" (68); Clara Durrant thinks him "unworldly" (68); Fanny Elmer speaks of his beautiful voice (113); and Sandra Williams compares him to the Hermes of Praxiteles (141). We know that he reads Shakespeare, Homer and Donne, has a picture of Van Gogh on his wall and opposes Home Rule for Ireland. We know at what age and year he attended Cambridge, what countries he visited

and when he died, and yet he continues to remain indistinct as a character. Clearly then, there is a conflict here between the wealth of detail we accumulate about Jacob and the sense that the sum of his life is somehow greater than the totality of its parts. "It is no use trying to sum people up," says the narrator, "one must follow hints, not exactly what is said, nor yet entirely what is done. Some, it is true, take ineffaceable impressions of character at once. Others dally, loiter, and get blown this way and that" (150).

Jacob, like Clarissa Dalloway and Mrs Ramsay, is typical of what has been called the "complex central consciousness" in modernist fiction. Where the ideal Renaissance protagonist is the pure embodiment of his will or ego, in modernism the central character is devoid of both. Detached and dispersed geographically and psychologically, the modern "hero" remains essentially anonymous (Quinones, Mapping 92-94). Paradoxically, however, the increased inwardness of the modern protagonist tends also to result in an increased emphasis on the multiplicity of the world around him or her. Writes Quinones: "the passivity of the central hero permits him to be used as a telling device for otherness, for the rich presentation of the multiplicity of existence" (105).

In Cubism, similarly, experience is created through the subjective assimilation of objects and memory or "plastic consciousness," in which the subject is seen to consist of the "diversity of its relations and the indefinite contiguity of its surfaces" as we move around it.²³ The work "shifts under the glance, contracts, expands, fades or illumines itself" (qtd. in Chipp 209) as its own space meets ours. In order to implicate the viewer fully within this Cubist space, the subject is exploded, its parts shattered to the degree that it is finally--like the modern hero--rendered anonymous. Daniel Henry Kahnweiler described this process in The Rise of Cubism:

Now the rhythmization necessary for the co-ordination of the individual parts into the unity of the work of art can take place without producing disturbing distortions, since the object in effect is no longer "present" in the painting. . . . In other words, there exist in the painting the scheme of forms and small real details as stimuli integrated into the unity of the work of art; there exists, as well, but only in the mind of the spectator, the finished product of the assimilation. (qtd. in Chipp 256)

Reading Jacob's Room, we are forced to undergo a similar process of assimilation. We must create Jacob on our own terms because, as the narrator tells us, "it seems that a profound, impartial, and absolutely just opinion of our fellow-creatures is utterly unknown" (69). As in "The Mark on the Wall," order and clarity are seen as human constructions superimposed on chaotic disorder:

In any case life is but a procession of shadows, and God knows why it is that we embrace them so eagerly, and see them depart with such anguish, being shadows. And why, if this and much more than this is true, why are we yet surprised in the window corner by a sudden vision that the young man in the chair is of all things in the world the most real, the most solid, the best known to us--why indeed? For the moment we know nothing about him.

Such is the manner of our seeing. Such the conditions of our love. (JR 69)

Many critics have articulated views of Jacob's Room in terms and concepts compatible with a Cubist aesthetic. Fleishman, for example, notes Woolf's technique of creating our experience of Jacob in the "shifting from

one narrative point of view to another to build up a medium of consciousness." He goes on to say that "this synthetic consciousness is derived from the multiple relationships which offer a rounded view of a character. . . . The effect of such composite views is to make Jacob manifest in the absence of a direct view of him" (64). In her study of form in Woolf's novels, Jean Alexander comes to a similar conclusion: "Here are the boldly inclusive leaps which make consciousness total in time, space and disparate minds, a totality which has been prepared for discreetly by all the oblique links between minds and matter in preceding episodes of the novel"(73).

To create plastic consciousness, Cubism exploits the a priori knowledge that we bring to a work of art, asking us, in part, to metonymically seek the whole from the part provided: a nose, a newspaper clipping, the edge of a table. Cubism also selects and splinters, postulating knowing as the condition of seeing. As Guiget has noted, Jacob's Room stresses the actual gap between the reader's a priori expectations of character and the problem of conveying that character in its totality: "and yet this multiplicity, this disorder or this imaginativeness--the word tells us more about the individual reader's mind than about the nature of the book--do no more than reproduce the two fold discontinuity and disconnectedness of human beings: that which is native to them, and that which is inherent in the observer's vision of them" (222). Indeed, throughout the novel, the narrator constantly refers to mental and visual information that could never be perceived simultaneously. As we see Jacob observing the Scilly Isles from his boat, for example, the line between vision and imagination becomes cloudy:

you could see clefts in the cliffs, white cottages . . . it wore an extraordinary look of piety and peace, as if old men smoked by the door, and girls stood, hands on hips, at the well, and horses

stood . . . and cabbage fields and stone walls, and coast-guard stations, and . . . the white sand bays with the waves breaking unseen by anyone. . . . (46)

Likewise, when Mrs Flanders looks at the moors, "the entire gamut of the view's changes should have been known to her" (15), a statement which prompts the narrator to list the look and feel of each season on any given day of the year as if it were actually apprehensible to her.

Not only are points of view ambiguously fused in Jacob's Room, but subtle changes in syntax and verb tense create a sense of layered time like the overlapping, semi-transparency of forms in Cubist painting. In the first two pages alone, for example, the reader moves unobtrusively by means of free indirect discourse from a narrative focalized in turn by Betty Flanders, Mrs Jarvis, Betty Flanders again and then Charles Steele. Tying these disparate thoughts together and confirming their simultaneity are the interspersed shouts of Archer calling Jacob's name. Later, as Jacob reads a letter from his mother, the narrative moves hazily in and out of his mind, becomes Betty Flanders' voice and then fuses the two consciousnesses as they travel backwards and forwards in time (87). In another passage, past and present become blurred when an anonymous young man leaning on the railings of a pier speculates on a woman's skirt. While the passage encompasses the depth of an enormous time span, this is juxtaposed with the "flatness" of the continual present in which it is written:

It changes; drapes her ankles--the nineties; then it amplifies--the seventies; now it's burnished red and stretched above a crinoline--the sixties. . . . Still sitting there? Yes--she's still on the pier. The silk now is sprigged with roses, but somehow one no longer sees so clearly. There's no pier beneath us. The heavy

chariot may swing along the turnpike road, but there's no pier for it to stop at, and how grey and turbulent the sea is in the seventeenth century! (16)

As past transparently overlaps present, mental and sensory planes also overlap. By superimposing one plane upon another, Woolf reveals the tension between what Quinones has called "innovative" versus "predictive" time--a technique apparent in practically all of Woolf's novels. For Quinones, the metaphysical problem of Jacob's Room is that actions no longer hold horizontal relations to those which came before them, but are instead "encased vertically in vast and empty space" (Mapping 41). As Jacob's narrator says: "we start transparent, and then the cloud thickens. All history backs our pane of glass. To escape is vain" (47). The amorphous nature of subjective time is also stressed by constant references to clock time, which seem absurdly incongruous in the context of the narrative. The church clock, which divides time into quarters, is juxtaposed also against the timelessness of the moors and the people who "join together in syllabbling at the sharp-cut words, which for ever slice asunder time and the broad-backed moors" (47). Clock time is seen as the artificial regulation of existence, another symbol of the structured irrationality of war and death. As Big Ben strokes five, for example, the scene switches to a vision of men with "bald, red-veined, hollow-looking" heads lifting their pens and decreeing "that the course of history should shape itself this way or that way, being manfully determined, as their faces showed, to impose some coherency . . . to control the course of events" (168). The essay on Jacob's desk: "Does History Consist of the Biographies of Great Men?" is a question answered ironically but definitively by the novel: history is simply an accumulation of artifacts, lives, deaths and

time, but if anything is clear, it is that we require more than simply facts, we require new ways of making sense of our experience.

Jacob's Room thus fulfills Quinones' modernist concept of the "paradox of time," which states that within the abundance and drive of industrial culture there lies the seeds of its own destruction (Literary Modernism 65). Quinones, moreover, sees this paradox as the source behind the drive toward spatialization in modern literature. For: "when the predictive aspect of time establishes such hegemony that it thoroughly eclipses the innovative, then, according to the paradox of time, we obtain a condition exactly the opposite of that which had prevailed in the Renaissance, we obtain the triumph of space" (67).

Jacob merges in and out of the world of solid objects that he comes into contact with. In Cubist painting also, according to Metzinger and Gleizes, "form appears endowed with properties identical with those of color. It is tempered or augmented by contact with another form; it is destroyed or emphasized; it is multiplied or it disappears"(qtd. in Chipp 213). As Hermione Lee has pointed out, Jacob "moves through a life which moves with him" (84). He is thus suggested by the crab struggling to escape from the bucket of water on "weakly legs"(7; 12); in the tree falling at the sound of a gun shot (21); in the sheep's jaw he finds as a child (8), as well in the slowly dying stag beetle (20). Woolf's descriptions of Greece, the British Museum and Cambridge are also coloured by Jacob's presence, but he is perhaps most vividly felt in the creaking fiber of the arm chair and in the just swelling curtain of his empty room, just as in Cubism the missing object is alluded to by the vague traces of presence it leaves in its ever-receding wake.

But if Jacob himself is composed of disparate, fragmented viewpoints, then he is but one instance of a broader structural pattern in Jacob's Room

that resonates from the largest to the smallest unit of text. Like a Cubist painting, the novel is a jagged collection of juxtaposed images, ready-made phrases, quotations, repetitions and descriptive passages which are themselves often miniature versions of the whole they make up. Jacob glances at the paper, for example, and sees at once "a strike, a murder, football, bodies found; vociferation from all parts of England simultaneously" (95). Dialogue is often caught in Cubistic snatches and fragments as well. At other times, sentences with no apparent relation to each other are placed adjacent to one another:

Florinda was sick.

Mrs Durrant, sleepless as usual, scored a mark by the
side of certain lines in the Inferno.

Clara slept buried in her pillows; on her dressing-table
dishevelled roses and a pair of long white gloves.

(74)

Woolf, like the Cubists, is alluding to the radical subjectivity of experience: the idea that truth no longer lies in the telling of facts, but somewhere in the movement and flux of life as it enters our perception. Overwhelmed by a constant barrage of sensory detail, we are forced to make the perceptual and intellectual decisions that will put the information we receive into a coherent form. In Jacob's Room, we become aware of the selective, often random nature of this process:

In short, the observer is choked with observations. Only to
prevent us from being submerged by chaos, nature and society
between them have arranged a system of classification which is
simplicity itself. stalls, boxes, amphitheatre, gallery. The moulds
are filled nightly. There is no need to distinguish details. But the

difficulty remains--one has to choose. . . . Never was there a harsher necessity! or one which entails greater pain, more certain disaster; for wherever I seat myself, I die in exile. (66)

The battle with chaos is an ongoing one throughout the novel; there is a sense of only just maintaining bearings, with formlessness and void a constant threat. And so we turn to the familiar and the known to comfort us, as Jacob's rationalist friend Bonamy seeks security in the world of facts and formed opinions. Fittingly, Bonamy likes "books whose virtue is all drawn together in a page or two" and "sentences that don't budge when armies cross them. I like words to be hard" (136). He is unnerved by the "dark sayings of Jacob," preferring instead "the definite, the concrete, and the rational" (142). He finds himself caught unawares, therefore, by the strikingly Cubist vision "of flower beds uncompromisingly geometrical; of force rushing round geometrical patterns in the most senseless way in the world" (148).

To Jacob, it seems the example of the Greeks alone provides the one constant factor in a world of indeterminacy. He contrasts the fragmented amorphousness of the world around with what he perceives as the certitude and durability of Greek civilization and art. Permanence is found in the "immortal" beauty of structures like the Parthenon which seem to exist "quite independently of our admiration" (144). Yet there is a sense even here that this immortal symmetry is only an illusion, as when Jacob notes, for example, that the backs of Greek statues are unfinished, so that "the side of the figure which is turned away from view is left in the rough" (145). He observes also the "slight irregularity" in the line of the Parthenon steps, which, as his guide book tells him, "the Greeks preferred to mathematical accuracy" (145).

The loss of any isolated certainties encroaches into the narrative realm as well. Woolf's "omniscient" narrator is not only denied any kind of privileged access into Jacob's consciousness, she is also riddled with doubts about the basic nature of her task. Indeed, at times she appears to know as little about Jacob as we do ourselves. Stripped of the usual incentives and advantages that come with the territory, it is not entirely surprising that she occasionally loses interest in the whole project:

Something is always impelling one to hum vibrating, like the hawk moth, at the mouth of the cavern of mystery, endowing Jacob Flanders with all sorts of qualities he had not at all--for though, certainly, he sat talking to Bonamy, half of what he said was too dull to repeat; much unintelligible . . . what remains is mostly a matter of guess work. Yet over him we hang vibrating.
(70)

The problem faced by the narrator is part of the greater artistic problem faced by Woolf herself: the question of sacrifice and perseverance in the search for the new tools and conventions she alludes to in "Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown." It is a search based upon premises familiar to the Cubists. As Gleizes and Metzinger wrote:

Above all, let no one be decoyed by the appearance of objectivity with which many imprudent artists endow their pictures. There are no direct means of valuing the processes by which the relations between the world and the thought of the artist are rendered perceptible to us. The fact commonly invoked, that we find in a painting the familiar characteristics which form its motive, proves nothing at all. (qtd. in Chipp 211)

Just as a Cubist painting spatially blurs the distinction between foreground and background, Woolf's novel also "flattens" experience by structurally abandoning a narrative drive toward a conclusion. There appear to be no real "climaxes" or "denouements" in Jacob's Room. Jacob's death in war at the end of the novel is presented like any other incident--it might even slip by an inattentive reader. This is not to say that Jacob's Room offers no conclusions or message, however, for it is in fact replete with suggestion. "To display a true relation we must be ready to sacrifice a thousand apparent truths," the Cubists wrote (qtd. in Chipp 207), and what the Cubist aesthetic of Jacob's Room conveys is that we have lost sight of these true relations by confusing abstractions with reality. In Jacob's Room, politics, war and death are the only real abstractions, while "reality" lies in the fragility of human relations--in the occasional glimmer of meaning we find in the dynamism of life itself. "There is something absolute in us which despises qualification," writes Woolf, "it is this which is teased and twisted in society" (JR 140). It is a sense conveyed by the narrator when she says: "It is thus that we live, they say, driven by an unseizable force. They say that the novelists never catch it; that it goes hurtling through their nets and leaves them torn to ribbons. This, they say, is what we live by--this unseizable force" (152). Like a Cubist painting then, Jacob's Room seems constantly to hang between chaos and understanding, and, like a Cubist painting, what finally holds it together is the potential for a new aesthetic vision.

4. Mrs Dalloway: Analytic vs Synthetic Cubism

Mrs Dalloway presents a further shift of emphasis in Virginia Woolf's writing from narrative content, in the traditional sense, toward the form and structure she had begun experimenting with in Jacob's Room. To be sure, Mrs Dalloway may seem to be the more "polished" novel of the two, giving the impression of being precise and integrated aesthetically in a way that Jacob's Room sometimes is not. A close examination, however, reveals a far more ambiguous, unstable reality than might first seem evident. Where Jacob's Room breaks down its subject into shattered fragments, Mrs Dalloway builds it up through a complex web of consciousness and signification, akin to what Steiner has called the "aestheticized structure of interrelations" of Cubism (Colours 191). Woolf brings this about through a sophisticated use of metaphor, symbol and structure, elements which create for her text a profound indeterminacy which prevents any easy conclusions about its meaning. In the manner of a Cubist painting, the novel makes repeated, tantalizing gestures toward closure, only to pull these away at the last instance.

Like Jacob's Room, Mrs Dalloway fits a Cubist reading, but what I would like to suggest is that while Jacob's Room might be considered compatible with what is commonly referred to as the first, "Analytic" phase of Cubism predominant until roughly 1912, the form of Mrs Dalloway is better understood in the light of the second "Synthetic" phase, which reaches maturity around 1914.²⁴ There are, of course, some critics who challenge the notion of "phases" in Cubism altogether, but while it may not always be clear-cut, there is certainly a marked difference between the works of the earlier and later Cubists. One of the most obvious physical changes takes place in the

use of materials, particularly the incorporated use of collage and papiers collés. The distinction is relevant to Woolf in that it provides a useful barometer for discerning changing notions of form and subject during the course of her literary career. In Analytic Cubism, and in works such as Jacob's Room, the subject is postulated as an absent whole which has been shattered or dissected. We are presented with a multitude of fragments and pieces which in some way express the totality from which they ultimately stem. The rendering of the "true" object is still the final aim, however, for by lending itself to analysis and interpretation, the object is still given a place in an objective reality, however elusive that reality may be (Gray 54). Gerald Kamber has found the concerns of the Analytic phase particularly applicable to his Cubist reading of the poetry of Max Jacob. In particular, he notes the similarity between the tearing down of images in both mediums in order to rebuild their components into an independent composition (23). Yet at the same time the Analytic work denies the viewer any final, coherent image by continually juxtaposing physical "clues" with ambiguous abstractions, thus creating an "unbearable tension" in the viewer: "he is delighted by the intellectual and sensuous appeal of an internally consistent pictorial structure, yet he is also tantalized by this structure in terms of the known visual world" (Fry, Cubism 20). The difficulty of defining Jacob Flanders, accordingly, lies in his perpetual absence from the scene, yet we are nevertheless aware that he could be knowable if conditions were different, i.e. if he would express himself, or remain physically present for a longer period of time.

Synthetic Cubism, alternately, is based on the construction of an aesthetic object through the build-up of abstract, ready-made shapes (Golding 116). Emphasis now lies in the creation of a new reality as opposed to the

interpretation of what we already know. Christopher Gray associates the transition to second phase Cubist painting with increased attention paid to the use of space around positive forms. Instead of remaining "empty," space takes on an importance equal to that of the forms which it encompasses, what Gray calls the "concept of equivalence of form and space" (92). In spite of its association with second phase Cubist painting, however, the interpenetration of space with solid mass was not so much a Cubist innovation as the re-adoption of a Cézannist technique. The Cubists adapted this method through the use of pasted materials such as newspaper or wood and the incorporation of substances such as ashes or sand into their paint in order to create a thickening and defining of texture in their canvases. In addition, Synthetic Cubist paintings revitalized the use of colour as an independent element of composition rather than as simply a means of modelling shape and form. This meant a move from the more muted, cooler shades of the earlier Cubist palette to the brighter, more vibrant colours of the later. The outcome of this, effectively, was to allow objects to represent themselves in the way they existed as objects in the real world. These units would then function catalytically: changing that which they come into contact with while still maintaining their original identity.

The most important difference between the two phases of Cubism, however, is that of conceptualization. Indeed, it is arguable that the transition from Analytic to Synthetic Cubism created a more significant change verbally than it did visually. That is, it might be said that the most drastic change between the two phases takes place in Cubist "philosophy": a shift from an epistemological to an aesthetic approach, a deductive as opposed to an inductive method. Instead of seeing the picture as the analysis of natural forms in their relation to the artist's pre-existent ideas, Gray argues,

Synthetic Cubism postulates the picture as the synthesis of the artist's a priori ideas which have been given concrete form in order to take their place among the world of natural forms (128). Gray interprets this as a return to a dualistic concept of reality akin to that espoused by Baudelaire and the Romantics in that it creates a fundamental dividing line between the material world and the world of the mind (128).

The frequently espoused notion, however, that Synthetic Cubism constitutes a move toward creating a more unified, internally coherent art-object, should be treated with some caution. As Christine Poggi has argued, the visual and mental experience of Synthetic Cubist works will reveal that all the same disruptions and discontinuities of the Analytic phase are still present--are, in fact, rendered more complex. Synthetic Cubism does this by playing on a heightened tension created between paradigm and reality, metaphor and "thing-in-itself." Poggi uses Picasso's use of framing during this period as an example of this confusion. She notes that his canvases, or parts of his frames, frequently began to appear within the picture itself, thus disrupting the usual delimitations of the work of art. Picasso also used oval frames or framing materials, such as rope, that could simultaneously function as objects within the canvas, such as tables. The point of this was not, as some critics have argued, to allow us to acquire a wealth of knowledge about these objects in order to see them as a unified totality. Quite the contrary, the more information we receive about these objects, the more perplexed we become. Says Poggi: "the material 'literalness' of the object is constituted within a system of oppositions just as the 'transparency' of the picture plane had been constituted as a fiction in opposition to the world outside the frame" (320).

This change also entails a move from an emphasis on ends, or "idea" in the Analytic phase to the problem of means in the Synthetic phase. One of the crucial aesthetic questions asked during this period in painting and writing alike is not so much which ideas should be expressed, but rather how artistic form alters or enhances our perception of an idea (Gray 138). Thus, in the "architectonic novel," we find that meaning is not so much found in the linear accretion of meaning, but in the relationships created among juxtaposed portions of the work, what Spencer calls "the interstices of structure" (174). This amounts not so much to a refutation of the traditional novel, but rather to a "concealment" of it beneath a new complexity of structure where different parts may stand on their own, but which may also take on alternate meanings when combined. As Woolf wrote of Ibsen: "the thing we are looking at is lit up, and its depths revealed. It has not ceased to be itself by becoming something else" (E1: 346). In both the novel and in Synthetic Cubism, the notion of the "unity" of the work is thus transferred from considerations of subject-matter, material or style to the process of reconciling competing formal structures in the mind of the reader or viewer.

Woolf's letters and diaries provide strong evidence for a shift towards aesthetic structure during the years leading up to Mrs Dalloway. In 1923 when it was still called "The Hours," Woolf complained that she felt compelled to "wrench" her substance to fit the form of the novel (D2: 249). This is a very different attitude from that with which she completed The Voyage Out in 1915, on which she commented retrospectively, "the whole was to have a sort of pattern, and be somehow controlled. The difficulty was to keep any sort of coherence . . . (is this possible in a novel?) Is the result bound to be too scattered to be intelligible?" (L2: 82). And later, with Jacob's Room, Woolf appeared to vacillate between the desire for formal innovation

and the security of more conventionally developed characters: "What the unity shall be, I have yet to discover. . . . Yet what about Form? Let us not suppose that the Room will hold it together" (D2: 14). Recording a discussion on that novel with Roger Fry, Woolf notes further: "I was praised wholeheartedly by him, for the first time; only he wished that a bronze body might somehow solidify beneath the gleams and lights, with which I agree" (D2: 214).

Allen McLaurin claims that when we read Mrs Dalloway our attention is drawn to the relation between the images presented rather than to the images themselves (44). Like Jacob's Room, Mrs Dalloway is also "about" a single character, but where Jacob's Room is based on the external reconstruction of a single identity through the fragmentary perceptions of a multitude of characters who are themselves fragments, Mrs Dalloway explores the formal relations between the internal world of developed consciousness and the external world it both shapes and collides with. Where we build Jacob deductively by means of the scant, narratorially controlled evidence we are given, with Clarissa Dalloway we are given unmediated access to her innermost thoughts and feelings, to her present as well as her past. Paradoxically, however, the problems of "knowing" and selfhood originally confronted in Jacob's Room are not resolved by a breaking down of the barriers set up by a closed consciousness--for much about Clarissa remains elusive, even to herself. We do learn about her, as we did Jacob, from what other characters say or think about her, but Clarissa Dalloway is also conveyed structurally through the configuration created by her relationship with the characters whom she knows (Sally Seton, Peter Walsh) as well as those she doesn't (Septimus Warren Smith). Clarissa's thoughts, comments and

actions are also imbued with meaning inasmuch as they come into contact with symbols or objects strategically placed throughout the novel:

She felt herself everywhere; not "here, here, here"--and she tapped the back of the seat; but everywhere. She waved her hand, going up Shaftesbury Avenue. She was all that. So that to know her, or any one, one must seek out the people who completed them; even the places. Odd affinities she had with people she had never spoken to, some woman in the street, some man behind a counter--even the trees, or barns. (231)

This might then be compared to John Richardson's comments on a Synthetic Cubist aesthetic, in his book Modern Art and Scientific Thought:

A Cubist image is made up not of elements of fractured objects but instead, is built from fragments of elements. That is to say, one does not discover there a piece of a vessel, a segment of an eyeball, a part of a table; one finds instead no more than the lines and strokes that might represent such things were they brought into other relationships. (110)

One of the major themes of Mrs Dalloway is the drive for the expression of a collective consciousness through the interaction of individual minds. In the world of the novel, the line between the individual and the collective is extremely fine. Each is shown to contain the seed of the other in the manner of a (which came first?) chicken/egg indeterminacy. An essential part of this dialectic, according to Morris Philipson, is a shoring up of the foundation of selfhood through the memory and reinterpretation of past experience, what he calls a process of "self reintegration" (128). This is at once an unending and unconscious reflex insofar as it is continually necessitated by the overwhelming daily "shocks" experienced by the self. However, this process

cannot be carried out in complete subjective isolation, since it requires also the reassurance that there is a qualifiable world of people and things outside of us that can ratify our beliefs: "This is precisely why reciprocal relations are the necessary condition for shared experience. Although the momentary consciousness of integration is perceived by each one in himself, the soundness of the objective reality on which it is based is continually subject to being confirmed or confuted by others" (Philipson 128).

Ultimately then, the difference between Septimus Warren Smith and Clarissa Dalloway is that she possesses this ability while he does not. But to the degree that we must accept Woolf's terms--that Septimus is Clarissa's "double"--we must also acknowledge the implied tendency to dissolution in Clarissa as well. Right from the start she is posited as a character with internal contradictions. Walking through Picadilly for instance:

She would not say of any one in the world now that they were this or were that. She felt very young; at the same time unspeakably aged. She sliced like a knife through everything; at the same time was outside, looking on . . . and she would not say of Peter, she would not say of herself, I am this, I am that. (11)

The criteria for Clarissa's continued existence in the "sane" world, as opposed to Septimus' "insane" one then, lie in her ability to maintain the reflex for self reintegration. Until this is accomplished, she remains precariously trapped in a kind of existential amorphousness ruled by Peter Walsh's fear that "nothing exists outside us except a state of mind" (85). Peter's utterance makes an interesting parallel with the Cubist claim of Gleizes and Metzinger that "there is nothing real outside ourselves; there is nothing real except the coincidence of a sensation and an individual mental tendency" (qtd. in Chipp 214). Accordingly, identity in Mrs Dalloway is always sought and found

outside the confines of time and space, where it is variously described as "cold, deep, inscrutable," "intangible," "bodiless," and "immaterial."

Clarissa is aware, as is Peter, that the greatest threats to self-hood occur in the most mundane of circumstances. Taking off her brooch at home, for example, Clarissa has the experience of "a sudden spasm, as if, while she mused, the icy claws had the chance to fix in her." Her reaction to this is expressed with psychological violence:

Clarissa (crossing to the dressing-table) plunged into the very heart of the moment, transfixed it, there--the moment of this June morning on which was the pressure of all the other mornings, seeing the glass, the dressing-table, and all the bottles afresh, collecting the whole of her at one point (as she looked into the glass), seeing the delicate pink face of the woman who was that very night to give a party; of Clarissa Dalloway; of herself. (54)

In this passage, Clarissa "herself" is seen as the net product of all that is given before her verbally and structurally in the paragraph. "She" is located somewhere in the interstices of her past, present and future selves. To read this again carefully, we find that the action of "transfixing the moment" (the present) takes the form of a non-verbal declaration buttressed by an inventory-taking of all the objects which she is familiar with (past) and those which surround her: the glass, the dressing table, the bottles. Placing herself in relation to these physically real objects, she is able to perceive herself as an abstraction: "the whole of her at one point"; then as a function: the woman who will give the party (future); followed by an identity: Clarissa Dalloway; which leads, finally, to a resolution, supposedly outside time: "herself."

Woolf had in fact explored the integration of solid and abstract psychological matter in an earlier story, "Solid Objects," that alludes to a kind of Synthetic Cubist process.²⁵ In it the narrator says: "Looked at again and again half consciously by a mind thinking of something else, any object mixes itself so profoundly with the stuff of thought that it loses its actual form and recomposes itself a little differently in an ideal shape which haunts the brain when we least expect it" (104). Similarly, as Edward Mendelson writes of Mrs Dalloway: "whenever anyone in the book has an emotion about something physically present and accessible, the object is perceived and identified first, and only then does the emotion follow"; while, in contrast, "the only instances in the book where characters are puzzled by their own emotions are those instances where the source of that emotion is physically absent" (276). One example of this takes place near the end of the novel, where Clarissa pronounces the name "Peter Walsh," only to find that it "meant nothing" (272).

Returning to the previous passage in front of the dressing table, we find Clarissa's gesture followed by an act of consolidation:

That was her self--pointed; dartlike; definite. That was her self when some effort, some call on her to be her self, drew the parts together, she alone knew how different, how incompatible and composed so for the world only into one centre, one diamond. . . . (55)

Though not explicitly stated, Clarissa's gesture contains within itself the acknowledgment of its own utility. It even foreshadows Mrs Ramsay's own attempt, in To the Lighthouse, to make "Life stand still here" (183)--as if Clarissa and Mrs Ramsay's parallel enunciations: "there" and "here," respectively, could literally solidify what by definition has no substance.

Nevertheless, one cannot help but detect the irony, even the humor, in their desire to "make it new" in the Poundian sense.

Perry Meisel, in The Myth of the Modern, characterizes what he calls the "Bloomsbury novel" in terms of exactly this kind of paradox. For Meisel, the Bloomsbury texts of Woolf, Strachey, and Forster find a "middle, saving ground" for modernist discourse by staging both "its wishful fulfillment of a return to origins, and, simultaneously, putting the reality of such ideals into question by exposing the belated means of their literary production" (161). These texts, he finds, are ultimately more satisfying than the typically "High Modernist" texts of Joyce, Eliot and Hardy, if only because they display a more healthy skepticism about the nature of the modernist project in general:

Bloomsbury writes a language of reverberation about the linguistic reverberations that constitute the real, especially the idioms of ordinary life, while simultaneously maintaining the coherence of its representationalism so as to thematize and account for the terms, dynamic, and history of the conceptual items or categories out of which its illusions are constructed.
(162)

Accordingly, Meisel sees Mrs Dalloway "not as an expression of the will to modernity, but as a catalogue of the kinds of modernist ideals temporality or belatedness disallows, together with an enormously lucid account of the larger structure of modernism that produces such ideals symptomatically" (183). Meisel's account is interesting not simply because it shows Woolf's awareness of the larger concerns of modernism--of which Cubism is an important part--but because it shows her making an attempt to write a reflexive modernist language like the Cubist's that grapples, sometimes ironically, with the nature of the "real."

While I would argue that Meisel at times ascribes a higher degree of skepticism and intentionality to Woolf's work than it may actually contain, there is no question that she was extremely sensitive to the theoretical aesthetic issues at stake in her work. In a fascinating letter written to Gerald Brennan between the writing of Jacob's Room and Mrs Dalloway, Woolf appears by turns doubtful and optimistic about the fate of modern fiction:

Ah, but I'm doomed! As a matter of fact, I think that we all are. It is not possible now, and never will be, to say I renounce [representationalism]. Nor would it be a good thing for literature were it possible. This generation must break its neck in order that the next may have smooth going. For I agree with you that nothing is going to be achieved by us. Fragments--paragraphs--a page perhaps; but no more. . . . The human soul, it seems to me, orientates itself afresh every now and then. It is doing so now. No one can see it whole, therefore. The best of us catch a glimpse of a nose, a shoulder, something turning away, always in movement. Still, it seems better to me to catch this glimpse, than to sit down with Hugh Walpole, Wells, etc. etc. and make large oil paintings of fabulous fleshy monsters complete from top to toe. . . . Every ten years brings, I suppose, one of those private orientations which match the vast one which is, to my mind, general now in the race. I mean, life has to be sloughed: has to be faced: to be rejected; then accepted on new terms with rapture. (L2: 598)

In Mrs Dalloway there is a sense that the physical and psychological fragmentation of the age has become the burden of those born into its consciousness. It is a disorientation, furthermore, that appears to intensify

with age. Peter Walsh, for example, suspects "from the words of a girl, from a housemaid's laughter--intangible things you couldn't lay your hands on--that shift in the whole pyramidal accumulation which in his youth had seemed immovable" (246). At the same time, the previous generation maintains a certain solidity and wholeness in the eyes of its offspring, that is, it still exists according to the context within which it defined itself. Thinking of Clarissa's deceased Aunt Helena, for instance, Peter Walsh notes: "she belonged to a different age, but being so entire, so complete, would always stand up on the horizon, stone-white, eminent, like a lighthouse marking some past stage on this adventurous, long, long, voyage, this interminable . . . --this interminable life" (247).

Clarissa and Peter's loss of integrated selfhood is tied to the loss of a reliable process of signification in the world. Traditional symbols are shown to have lost their potency. War, government, nationalism, monarchy and religion--represented in turns by the airplane, the motor car, the flag, the statue of Victoria and the cross--are all traditional symbols of unification that have lost their ability to draw people together on the basis of commonly held beliefs. Now, we are told, they merely "bestowed emotion, vainly, upon commoners out for a drive" (27). Hollowed and bereft of significance and meaning, they reveal the tenuousness of the social fabric which they are supposed to consolidate; and yet the sight of a high ranking official passing down Bond St still raises peoples' hopes:

Something so trifling in single instances that no mathematical instrument, though capable of transmitting shocks in China, could register the vibration; yet in its fullness rather formidable and in its common appeal emotional; for in all the tea shops

and tailors' shops strangers looked at each other and thought of the idea; of the flag; of Empire. (26)

This is juxtaposed with a scene in a local pub taking place simultaneously:

In a public house in a back street a Colonial insulted the House of Windsor which led to words, broken beer glasses, and a general shindy, which echoed strangely across the way in the ears of girls buying white underlinen threaded with pure white ribbon for their weddings. For the surface agitation of the passing car as it sunk grazed something very profound. (26)

The thing grazed is not the profundity of consolidation, but of dislocation.

The events of the day fail to make the promised connections: the personality in the car is never revealed, the message tantalizingly offered by the airplane in the word "KEY" (one thinks of Picasso's use of BAL or JOU), is mockingly revealed as an advertisement for toffee (42).

The breakdown of the social order is mirrored in its art as well, in Sir Harry's "bad" academic paintings, which, we are told: "were always of cattle, standing in sunset pools absorbing moisture, or signifying, for he had a certain range of gesture, by the raising of one foreleg and the toss of the antlers, 'the Approach of the Stranger'" (266). For Sir Harry and his generation, life imitates art and not vice versa. To ensure this, Sir Harry sees to it that: "all his activities, dining out, racing, were founded on cattle standing absorbing moisture in sunset pools" (266). For them, art is supposed to represent a measure of security, being executed and appreciated in order to reinforce the ordered and the known. As a result, any sense of aesthetic value this generation ever had has been lost. Sir William Bradshaw, stopping to look at a picture, for example, looks first "in the corner for the engraver's

name. His wife looked too. Sir William Bradshaw was so interested in art" (294).

Discussing the upheaval caused by the advent of the modern artistic sensibility, Ortega y Gasset sheds light on the kind of ideological dynamic set up by Woolf's references to art in Mrs Dalloway. Noting that artistic forms are traditionally valued insofar as they do not interfere with ordinary life--a tendency particularly true of the nineteenth century--Ortega argues that people cling to the "human reality" found in paintings like Sir Harry's pastorals because of the familiar emotional response they arouse. Any trace of "artistic transparency" which might draw attention to the subjectivity of social reality is stringently avoided (Ortega 11). Yet it is exactly this artistic transparency that the art of the Cubists, and, I believe, the art of Mrs Dalloway, is intent upon establishing. In Cubist hands, metaphor no longer holds a function which is merely ornamental, but, as Ortega puts it, is "realized" in an inversion of the aesthetic process (36-37). Metaphor now provides a tool for creation which furnishes an escape from the real by disposing of objects through the process of substitution, just as in Mrs Dalloway, according to Robert Alter, the vehicle of simile is "endowed with such an abundance of life that the tenor to which it supposedly refers comes to seem quite secondary" (152). In Cubism ideas are taken as subjective patterns and made "to live as such, lean and angular, but pure and transparent" (Ortega 38), a statement which brings to mind Woolf's claim years later in Moments of Being that: "If I were a painter I should make a picture that was globular; semi-transparent . . . curved shapes, showing the light through, but not giving a clear outline." (66).

In the novel as a whole, there are no specific Post-Impressionist equivalents to the traditional academic paintings seen at Clarissa's party. And

yet the very form of the novel itself provides far more effective and subtle terms of contrast between paradigms than the intrusion of any Picasso or Matisse could. The irony of Sir Harry and Sir Williams' preoccupations is thus all the greater because they are embedded structurally in the very thing they are trying to suppress.

Sir William's role in the novel is a pivotal one in just this way. He is obsessed with making "an exacting science" of what "after all, we know nothing about--the nervous system, the human brain" (249), yet his presence at Clarissa's party provides the crucial connection between her and Septimus that will establish the latter as her "double": the synthetic link between the two disparate but parallel lives. Fittingly then, his obsession is with the maintenance of "a sense of proportion," which, although it is a balance he purports to selflessly restore in others, is in reality the crux of his own, and his society's alleged "sanity":

Proportion, divine proportion, Sir William's goddess, was acquired by Sir William walking hospitals, catching salmon, begetting one son in Harley Street by Lady Bradshaw, who caught salmon herself and took photographs scarcely to be distinguished from the work of professionals. Worshipping proportion, Sir William not only prospered himself but made England prosper, secluded her lunatics, forbade childbirth, penalised despair, made it impossible for the unfit to propagate their views until they, too, shared his sense of proportion. (150-51)

Proportion is thus the instituted means by which the threatening and the irrational are suppressed and sterilized, while the states of sanity or insanity, respectively, are proffered as the outcome of its adoption or negation.

Septimus is diagnosed by Bradshaw as having "lost" this sense, and, by threatening to kill himself, has invoked the greatest threat to Bradshaw's stable order. At the same time, however, Septimus is the ultimate victim of that order, both as a result of his experiences in the War as well as by his likely homosexual relationship with Evans who was killed in it. Septimus threatens to reveal, therefore, what Bradshaw least wants to know: that there is no true proportion beyond our social construction of it.

As in Jacob's Room and many of Woolf's other novels, "proportion" or its equivalent is associated with the reduction of experience into measurable, controllable units, like that found in the chiming of Big Ben, in war and politics, in Sir Harry's pastorals, and even in the process of self reintegration practiced by Clarissa. It is, in fact, the antithesis of the inner life of consciousness Woolf explores in the novel. In painting, Renaissance perspective also constitutes such an ordering by creating the illusion of three-dimensional depth on a surface which is actually flat. However real it may appear, the result is necessarily illusionistic. Septimus' suicide is seen as the inevitable outcome of his failure to accept the imperatives imposed on his existence by the world of Bradshaw and Holmes. For him, words have become transparent fragments of the more sordid reality that lies beneath them. Inquiring about Septimus' service in the War, Sir William notes with alarm that "he was attaching meanings to words of a symbolical kind. A serious symptom, to be noted on the card" (145). What Sir William calls "symbolical" is, paradoxically, a literal reality for Septimus.

This issue then, of what is finally metaphor and what is reality, is one of the crucial questions posed by the novel. One of Woolf's most cunning articulations of it occurs in the ambiguous phrasing at the end of Sir William's diatribe on proportion: "Sir William with his thirty years'

experience of these kinds of cases, and his infallible instinct, this is madness, this sense; in fact, his sense of proportion" (151). Read one way, the sentence implies that Sir William's instinct for proportion was infallible in distinguishing madness from sense, but read in another, what emerges is that "this is madness, this sense . . . of proportion." An interesting analogy can be drawn with the practice of applying real, textured surfaces onto the canvas in Synthetic Cubism. While one purpose of this technique was to focus attention on the most important feature of the object described without actually resorting to illusionistic detail, another was to create for the work of art a troubling new status as a means of signification. For where in Saussurean thinking the sign normally stands for the absence of the signifier or referent, Cubism reverses this relation of representation to model, making sign and signifier indistinguishable from one another (Poggi 317). Later on, this technique was modified as artists began to create illusionistic imitations of the textures they had been pasting, such as chair-caning or wood-grain, that were virtually indistinguishable from the real thing. For those with a sharp enough eye to notice the difference, the practice introduced a new level of interpretation into the nature of what is real and what is false, since the identity of the object must once again be re-interpreted as the imitation of something that is already an imitation of something else (Rosenblum 93).

In Cubism, writes Poggi, "what is affirmed is the interchangeability of the terms 'literal' and 'figurative'--that is, the way in which, in a system in which individual terms have no essential meaning but only differential values, the functional identity of opposed terms can be revealed" (320). In a similar fashion, both Septimus and Clarissa have a tendency to translate their emotions into physical metaphors indistinguishable from the emotions they are supposed to represent (Lee 108). Woolf perpetually ensures that final

judgments in the novel are never so straightforward as they may initially seem. She makes clear, for example, that the term "proportion" cannot be seen as inherently good or bad, for its meaning changes depending upon the context in which it is applied. Thus, while in Sir Williams' hands it becomes a tool for suppression, there is clearly a need for proportion in people's lives insofar as it creates the coherence necessary for the regular functioning of society. Sir William attempts to invoke proportion where none can exist, but he also, albeit unwittingly, creates proportion in the novel structurally by effecting the Clarissa-Septimus link. Learning about Septimus' death, in turn, enables Clarissa to come to terms with her own mortality--hence a kind of proportion, in the sense of a balance, is created in this process. As E. H. Gombrich has said of Cubism:

Where it succeeds is in countering the transforming effects of an illusionist reading. It does so by the introduction of contrary clues which will resist all attempts to apply the test of consistency. Try as we may to see the guitar or the jug suggested to us as a three-dimensional object and thereby to transform it, we will always come across a contradiction somewhere which compels us to start afresh. (240)

This pattern may also be said to constitute a kind of proportion, in the sense of invoking a truce between warring opposites competing for dominance. This guiding principle would also seem to be the basis for Woolf's handling of language in Mrs Dalloway, where ideas competing equally with one another for our attention never quite succeed in emerging victorious (Lee 96). Hence, when Edward Mondschen pleads for a "middle distance" (itself a painterly concept) reading of Mrs Dalloway, he does so on the grounds that it is what the combined weight of the novel calls for (277).

By continually denying consistent readings, symbols in Mrs Dalloway come to perform complex, contradictory and sometimes even self-nullifying functions. Major symbols such as the airplane, automobile and ambulance bell all have a dual function both as transitions between consciousnesses but also as disruptions to the narrative flow. "In themselves," writes Quick, "they fail to make the clarifying connections typical of the fictive transition. They are wholly incidental, even antipathetic, to the main psychological action, entering and departing suddenly, being forgotten without having shaped the progress of the narrative" ("Shattered" 129). Every new symbol in the narrative thus holds the potential for either unification or dissolution. Peter Walsh, for example, hearing the bell of the ambulance that carries Septimus' dead body away, feels "there coming to him by the pillar-box opposite the British Museum one of them, a moment, in which things came together; this ambulance; and life and death"; but the moment vanishes almost as soon as it is realized, with Peter remembering that "it had been his undoing in Anglo-Indian society--this susceptibility" (230). With this said, the ambulance bell loses its potential as a sign and becomes merely another inarticulate noise in a city full of them.

The dense layering of text in the novel, which blends the intangible with the real and confuses the potential with the actual, often makes it impossible to pinpoint the original source of metaphors, thus creating a typically Cubist confusion between the boundaries of different entities as well as a sense of infinite regression. The connection between Septimus and Clarissa, for example, is not a straightforwardly metaphorical one of vehicle to tenor, but is instead created through a literal resemblance between metaphors which are used, by turns, to create similarity and difference between them. One instance of this is in the following passage concerning

Septimus which picks up on the imagery found in the earlier scene of Clarissa at her dressing table:

. . . and this gradual drawing together of everything to one centre before his eyes, as if some horror had come almost to the surface and was about to burst into flames, terrified him. The world wavered and quivered and threatened to burst into flames. It is I who am blocking the way, he thought. Was he not being looked at and pointed at; was he not weighted there, rooted to the pavement, for a purpose? But for what purpose? (21)

In both passages the image of drawing parts toward a centre is repeated almost verbatim. But while for Clarissa this creates a necessary unity, for Septimus it is, paradoxically, horrific and terrifying. She seeks solidity for her being, while he feels unnervingly weighted to the ground. Where Clarissa exudes a "radiancy" Septimus' world threatens to be devoured in flames. The passages are also tied together semantically by the word "pointed." Clarissa, for instance, is described as "pointed, dartlike, definite" while Septimus' wife Rezia is described as having a "sallow, pointed face." Septimus himself is not described as "pointed" but feels, conversely, "pointed at" by passers-by, and also perhaps metaphorically by Clarissa and Rezia, whose physical characteristics tie them to the act of pointing. Septimus is also described as "beak nosed": a term synonymous with "pointed" but analogous to an earlier passage where Scrope Purvis, observing Clarissa, finds in her: "a touch of the bird . . . of the jay, blue-green" (4).

Together, Septimus and Clarissa represent the dialectical tensions of the self, an entity which, like the Cubist canvas, continually mediates between extremes of surface and depth. As Peter Walsh speculates:

For this is the truth about our soul, he thought, our self, who
 fish-like inhabits deep seas and plies among obscurities
 threading her way between the boles of giant weeds, over sun-
 flickered spaces and on and on into gloom, cold, deep,
 inscrutable; suddenly she shoots to the surface and sports on the
 wind-wrinkled waves; that is, has a positive need to brush,
 scrape, kindle herself, gossiping. (244)

Clarissa, with her fear of the unknown, is particularly attached to surfaces while Septimus takes the ultimate extreme of depth, literally plunging to his death. The image of Clarissa as a diamond is especially appropriate to her personality since the beauty of the diamond lies in the interplay of its prismatic surfaces and planes, rather than in its opacity. Clarissa lives in a world of superficiality while Septimus probes the unknown recesses of the mind. Yet "depth" is also introduced into Clarissa's life structurally through the Septimus plot, which allows her, vicariously, to overcome her fear of stepping below the surface. Interestingly enough, surfaces in Mrs Dalloway are frequently associated with the term "brushing"--an image linked directly to painting. We are told of Hugh Whitbread, for example, that "he did not go deeply. He brushed surfaces" (155).

Our sense of the text as being simultaneously fractured and whole is also emphasized through a variety of verbal devices: exact repetition, reminiscent variations, phrasal inversion, the use of related eye and ear imagery and the recurrence of similar phrase and sentence rhythms (McLaurin 150). In Synthetic Cubism also, "visual rhyming" or repetition plays an important role in the manner that morphologically similar elements or forms are emphasized in the signs to which they belong (Fry, Cubism 34). A relevant comparison can be made here with the technique of Picasso's

"Three Musicians," of which Edward Fry has said: "each element . . . is presented by means of a sign, which itself is the product of a long historical evolution; and all the signs are related to each other by the greatest number of means possible, including visual rhymes, interlocking planes, and the colour scheme" (34).

In Mrs Dalloway, the repetition of familiar words and phrases scattered throughout the novel has a similar effect: making them seem familiar and distant at the same time as they alter meaning according to their context. Here, writes one critic: "the repetition of a phrase expresses the movement of the mind as it circles around the problem of connecting the mind and body" (McLaurin 126). Repetition sometimes causes words to take on plastic and poetic qualities different from their normal values in the same way that a word begins to seem unfamiliar if it is stared at for a prolonged period of time. In his meeting with Bradshaw, for example, Septimus is told that he and Rezia must be separated: "'Must,' 'must,' why 'must'? What power had Bradshaw over him? 'What right has Bradshaw to say 'must' to me?' he demanded" (223). Continually repeating the word "must," Septimus challenges the ontological status of the word as the precondition for action. By dislodging it from its context, Septimus renders it nonsensical and transparent--an object with an arbitrary relationship to its given meaning. By challenging the word, Septimus challenges authority, a conclusion underscored by the word-play which makes "must" sound like "musty" a word which humorously equates Bradshaw and his society with the outmoded and ineffective.

As was mentioned earlier, some critics, such as Steiner, qualify Synthetic Cubism as a literary mode where relational units are multiplied at the expense of mimetic ones ("Limits" 149). Woolf uses this device

frequently. One such example occurs in the following passage, where Peter Walsh describes a conversation with an unidentified family, the Morrises: "and their relations to each other are perfect, and they don't care a hang for the upper classes, and they like what they like, and Elaine is training for the family business, and the boy has won a scholarship at Leeds, and the old lady . . . has three more children at home; and they have two motor cars" (243). By suppressing vocabulary and expanding syntax, the paragraph, like the Cubist image, builds itself through overlapping units, thus attenuating a feeling of duration and process. The strung-out, Steinian sentence is an appropriate form for the subject-matter here, which amounts to an enumeration of "things" that the Morrises own or have. By conjoining every segment with the conjunction "and" Woolf devises a sentence tantamount to a shopping list, which, in turn, has the effect of demeaning the significance of individual segments--in Cubist terms, "flattening" it--by rendering each unit the equal of the next. Thus, motor cars are seen as equivalent to family relations and are acquired in much the same way. Without being explicit, the reader infers from Peter's thoughts a moral critique of the Morrises' values, a process which renders his earlier comment, that their talk was "not profound" seem more acerbic than it may have initially appeared.

Other interesting analogies can be made between the Synthetic Cubist practice of collage and the use of motifs in the novel. One of the most pervasive of these is the "cutting" and "scraping" motif. We are told, for instance, that Clarissa "sliced like a knife through everything" (11); of Sir William it is said "an interesting figure he cut" (156); Miss Kilman is "a soul cut out of immaterial substance" (203); Septimus pleads "do not cut down trees" (224); and Peter Walsh believes that the soul has a need to "brush, scrape, kindle herself" (244). Peter is associated with cutting as a result of his

nervous habit of opening and closing his large pocket knife. Scissors, also, play prominent roles with Rezia and Clarissa. Allusions to characters being cut and pasted creates a literal resemblance to the act of collaging, as with Lady Bruton who "had never seen the sense of cutting people up . . . cutting them up and sticking them together again" (157). The fact that some people are said to be cut out of "immaterial substance" also adds a Cubist transparency to the image. Septimus' vision of people "cutting out buckram shapes with their scissors" (220) is interesting for its use of "buckram"--a coarse linen stiffened with gum or paste--which was precisely the kind of material used for collage by the Cubists. Symbolically, "scraping" "grazing" and "rasping" are found wherever characters are found resisting or assimilating one another. These images, McLaurin writes, "move in that area between absolute connection and absolute separation, between inclusion and exclusion, which lie at the centre of the novel" (42). Like the rest of Woolf's interconnected imagery, they cannot be abstracted from the context of the novel without being "cut" out of it. Woolf's use of this motif finds a precedent in her essay on Walter Sickert, where, describing a group of people studying Sickert's work, she writes: "they fetched a book of photographs from Sickert's paintings and began cutting off a hand or a head, and made them connect or separate, not as a hand or a head but as if they had some quite different relationship" (E2: 236).

Mrs Dalloway also relates to Cubism pictorially through Torgovnick's iconographic mode. The image of the veil, for example, which recurs throughout the novel, is related both to the transformation and transparency of Cubism. Peter's vision of the woman who sheds "veil after veil," for example, conveys a sense of the woman as composed of overlapping layers, while in another scene a newspaper placard is visually equated with both a kite and a lady's veil (170-71). "Angular" is another prominent adjective in

the novel. Thus Septimus is "big nosed, angular"; Milly Brush is "knobbed, scraped, angular"; Lady Bruton takes Hugh's carnations "with her angular grim smile" (157); there is also the "eager advance of myriads of angular men." Characters are also described as "abstract." Elizabeth, for instance, finds she must deal with Miss Kilman "in her abstraction" (196).

Two of the most important guiding principles behind the Cubist form of Mrs Dalloway are simultaneity and spatialization (Hafley 67). London is the main spatial structure for the novel, an enabling framework within which the coincidences and connections of the narrative are contained (Beker, *passim*). Woolf's use of this spatial structure is extremely precise: thus, Clarissa's route through London is the opposite of her husband's and perpendicular to her daughter's. Peter Walsh's stroll is the most extensive of the three, appropriate, Fleishman suggests, given his status as a world traveller (71). Transitional devices such as the limousine, the airplane and the many minor characters who appear throughout the novel also create a sense of spatialization by creating a bridge between consciousnesses. By displacing a central vantage point, these devices allow us to Cubistically move around the characters who are in turn moving around the events of the day.

Perhaps more than any other Woolf novel, Mrs Dalloway compels us to continually re-evaluate what we have already read based on new information presented in the narrative--making it "spatial" in Frank's sense of the term. Quinones locates the "genius" of Mrs Dalloway in its plotting, "its lines that could be called arabesque, where individuals from one line will pick up a thread that has already been formed into a concavity and loop it into another, thus resuming and advancing the line of discourse" (107). Through memory, the lives of individual characters unfold discontinuously rather than progressively, just as in Cubism the rejection of fixed temporal relations gives

one the sense of "neither duration nor instantaneity, but rather a composite time of fragmentary moments without permanence or sequential continuity" (Rosenblum 40). Sometimes the presence of a character, as with the arrival of Peter Walsh, causes a rush of the past into the present of the narrative to create the semblance of simultaneity.

Memory also acts as both a restorer as well as a disruptor of the characters' sense of reality. Character itself is seen as an expression of simultaneity in that it is a vertical projection which strives continually to see itself as the culmination of its experiences in the present moment. Meyerhoff has argued that the relationship between time and the self in the modern novel is based on an attempt to justify the belief that the self is a continuing, functional unity to which identity can be attributed. For him, the reconstruction of the self constitutes an attempt to achieve personal timelessness, not in the sense of infinite time, but in the sense of an experience beyond the realm of physical time, in the "now" of vividly re-lived experience (49-56). Thus Peter Walsh, newly arrived from India, contrasts what he sees as the linearity of Clarissa's life with the simultaneity of his own: "And this has been going on all the time! he thought; week after week; Clarissa's life; while I--he thought; and at once everything seemed to radiate from him; journeys; rides; quarrels; adventures; bridge parties; love affairs; work; work; work!" (65).

Simultaneity is created through a variety of grammatical devices as well. Woolf's use of the pronoun "one," for example, functions to allow the easy transference from one character to another, just as the connective "for" makes leaps of thought appear as if they were part of a narrative progression. Present participles have a similar function in connecting thought and action, while parentheses are used to reveal multiple levels of diegesis without the

need for connectives. Woolf herself was to comment on this technique when she wrote the ending of To the Lighthouse: "could I do it in a parenthesis? So that one had the sense of reading the two things at the same time?" (D3: 106).

Punctuation is another important element. Semi-colons are used to create relations of equivalence and to prolong the normal scope of the sentence, while colons permit the mutual existence of disparate states of mind, as in Clarissa's ambiguous pronouncement on Miss Kilman: "she hated her: she loved her" (266). Hermione Lee also cites the use of "vistas" in Mrs Dalloway where an actual past moment, the actual present moment and the hypothetical future are merged, making them indistinguishable from one another (113).

As in Jacob's Room, one of the fundamental concerns of Mrs Dalloway is the perceived tension between "innovative" and "predictive" time. The exceedingly short time-frame of the novel, therefore, is juxtaposed to the inordinately long inner digressions which displace physical action and location. Characters, like Peter Walsh, perpetually try to control time by reifying it. For Walsh, the "supreme power of existence" lies in one's ability to transform the temporal amorphousness of life into a spatial entity, what he phrases as: "the power of taking hold of experience, of turning it round, slowly, in the light" (119). This reification of time is echoed throughout the text, most evidently in the repeated image of Big Ben with its "leaden circles" dissolving. Indeed, Big Ben is finally seen as less significant for its time-keeping than for the physical transitions it makes between consciousnesses.

Clarissa and Septimus both place spatial values on time. We are told, for example, that Clarissa "feared time itself" (44), that she "plunged into the heart of the moment" (54); while Septimus sees "the word 'time' split its husk" and pour "its riches over him" (105). Time is also said to "flap on the

mast" (74), while another vivid image shows the city clocks relentlessly "shredding and slicing, dividing and subdividing" time, as they "nibble" at the day. There is also a clash between the chiming of the more personal, innovative "late clock" of St. Margaret's and the impersonal authority of Big Ben:

Volubly, troublously, the late clock sounded, coming in on the wake of Big Ben, with its lap full of trifles. Beaten up, broken up by the assault of carriages, the brutality of vans, the eager advance of myriads of angular men, of flaunting women, the domes and spires of offices and hospitals, the last relics of this lap full of odds and ends seemed to break, like the spray of an exhausted wave, upon the body of Miss Kilman . . . (194)

Clarissa's "offering"--her party--is an attempt to go beyond these divisive tendencies in modern life toward an innovative unity of consciousness: "to go deeper, beneath what people said (and these judgments, how superficial, how fragmentary they are!)," to ask "in her own mind now, what did it mean to her, this thing she called life?" (184). Full of potentialities, chances for people to communicate, to re-assemble through presence and memory--the party nevertheless fails as a result of its acute self-consciousness. Like the rest of the novel, it aims toward the spatialized "moment" of potential fulfillment, Clarissa's sense of: "an illumination; a match burning in a crocus; an inner meaning almost expressed"; yet as soon as this is even glimpsed, "the close withdrew; the hard softened. It was over--the moment" (47). Characters are constantly disrupting each other's thoughts, preventing the creation of wholes. The word "interrupt" appears throughout the narrative, emblematic of the many shocks and jolts that burden its flow, as with Clarissa: "Oh this horror! She said to herself, as if she

had known all along that something would interrupt, would embitter her moment of happiness" (53). And in an earlier passage Septimus speculates:

Sounds made harmonies with pre-meditation; the spaces between them were as significant as the sounds. A child cried. Rightly far away a horn sounded. All taken together meant the birth of a new religion--'Septimus!' said Rezia. He started violently. People must notice. (33)

In the last measure, ironically, it is the very thing that Clarissa and her society most fear that becomes the basis for their commonality: death. Initially, of course, the mention of Septimus' suicide threatens to ruin everything Clarissa has built up until this moment: "what business had the Bradshaws to talk of death at her party?" (280) she demands, but the significance of the disturbance is then revealed in a moment of contemplation: "a thing there was that mattered . . . This he had preserved. Death was defiance. Death was an attempt to communicate; people feeling the impossibility of reaching the centre which, mystically, evaded them; closeness drew apart; rapture faded, one was alone. There was an embrace in death" (280-81). And so Clarissa's final act, a distinctively Cubist one, is accomplished by a merging: "she felt somehow very like him--the young man who had killed himself"; and a return to process: "but she must go back. She must assemble," and hence a kind of synthesis, where Clarissa's brief sense of internal coherence is reflected in her external reality in the eyes of others: "and there she was." Yet this summing up is in no way final, is not even unique, since the phrase is a repetition of a statement made earlier by Peter Walsh (66). Still, it is close to what Rosenblum establishes as the "basic meaning" of Cubism, which "depends upon both the external reality of

nature and the internal reality of art" (58). Appropriate to Cubism also, Clarissa's act is not a revelation of transcendental truth, but instead a recognition of its impossibility. What emerges most is the fundamental importance of losing oneself "in the process of living"--an idea consolidated by Clarissa's inspired vision of the woman next door going to bed. Woolf thus creates an elegant indeterminacy, for in the end, as Quick has written: "the resolution of the formal and philosophical problems of Mrs Dalloway is a compromise. Unity is partly discovered, partly asserted" ("Shattered" 134).

4. Between the Acts: Paradigm, Language and Reflexivity

Written during the time when Woolf was laboriously completing her biography of Roger Fry and unrevised at the time of her suicide, Between the Acts builds on the emerging Cubist form of the other novels. Jack Stewart, in fact, believes that the "recognition of Cubist elements [in Between the Acts] is essential to appreciation of the novel's form" ("Cubist" 67). Although it deals with many of the same issues as earlier works: problems of time and consciousness; the role of the artist/creator; and the isolation of human beings--to name a few--our experience of these is intensified through a more deliberate use of language, syntax and paradigm; an emphasis on "showing" rather than telling. To recall Perloff's equation, it represents a further move in Woolf's work from using indeterminacy as a motif to applying indeterminacy as the basis of the novel's discourse. The unfinished quality of the novel, deliberate or not, is very much a part of this heightened sense of indeterminacy. In spite of its seemingly wide scope (the whole of English history, in fact) Between the Acts depends to a far greater degree on its own internal reflexivity than the other novels. As such it requires a greater degree of reader participation in the textual process. Like Analytic Cubism it deconstructs the known image, and like Synthetic Cubism it attempts, through the efforts of Miss La Trobe, to build a new aesthetic creation out of the fragments left from the past. At stake in the novel, writes J. Hillis Miller, "is the power of the mind to construct itself and its concomitant power to construct a proper work of art" (205).

In the novel, the burden of meaning is carried almost entirely by speech (Lee 207). The decay of language has thus become inseparable from the disjointed, nonsensical character of modern life, for both, we are frequently

told, are merely "scraps, orts and fragments." People are frustrated by their inability to recall common phrases, quotations or songs, the tune which is "something half known, half not" (132) is counterpoised to the audience's sense of itself as "a little not quite here or there" (110). Origins of expressions have been lost: "'What's the origin . . . of the expression 'with a flea in his ear?'" (91); yet the ones that are remembered seem monotonous and childish, as with the insidious drone of "Four and Twenty Blackbirds" (Lee 210). The choppy transcriptions of audience dialogue uttered in the intervals of the pageant are equally as fragmented. Unable to discuss anything except the trivial, people find they cannot complete their thoughts, their sentences are cut off mid-way: "'We haven't the words--we haven't the words,' Mrs Swithin protested" (44); with the wind constantly "blowing their words away," even nature seems to be in league against communication (92).

For a "book-shy" generation, writing is also difficult. Says Mrs Manresa: "'For myself . . . speaking plainly, I can't put two words together. I don't know how it is--such a chatterbox as I am with my tongue, once I hold a pen--' She made a face, screwed her fingers as if she held a pen in them. But the pen she held thus on the little table absolutely refused to move. 'And my handwriting--so huge--so clumsy--'" (48). Once again we find that the loss of order and the deterioration of communication coincide with the eve of war. As with "The Mark on the Wall," this fact is only briefly mentioned, yet its importance cannot be underestimated:

Giles nicked his chair into position with a jerk. Thus only could he show his irritation, his rage with old fogies who sat and looked at views over coffee and cream when the whole of Europe--over there--was bristling like . . . He had no command of metaphor. Only the ineffective word 'hedgehog' illustrated

his vision of Europe, bristling with guns, poised with planes. At any moment guns would rake that land into furrows; planes splinter Bolney Minster into smithereens and blast the Folly.

(43)

Terms with strong "plastic" qualities, such as "bristling" "splinter" "jerk" and "poised with planes" are used consistently throughout the novel. Woolf also uses devices such as assonance: "like quicksilver sliding" (137); alliteration: "scattered" "shattered"; "exported" "expatriated"; punning: "how silly to make bones of trifles when we're all flesh and blood under the skin" (32); onomatopoeia: "chuff, chuff, chuff"; and rhyme: "armed and valiant, bold and blatant, firm elatant" (83) to disrupt syntax and draw our attention to the texture and rhythm of the writing. The actual words Woolf uses are also sharper, more staccato than her usual descriptive terms. As in Mrs Dalloway, the effect of this is to create a layered, overlapping quality which, like Cubist "passage," is based on the simultaneous perception of the sameness and difference of terms used. Parallel verbs, adverbs and adjectives linked throughout the novel in clusters of two or three also achieve this effect, thus we find: "flurriedly, disconnectedly"; "purring" "churning" "assembling"; "yielded" "pitched" "plunged." Even names are linked phonetically, as with "Bart" "Batty" "Bates"; "Isa" "Giles" and "Manresa." Hermione Lee ties this downgrading of names to nicknames to a corresponding sense of lost dignity and sense of self. Lucy's name, for instance, is also "Cindy, or Sindy, for it could be spelled either way"; Mrs Swithin is "Old Flimsy"; while Miss La Trobe is reduced by the audience to "Miss Whatsername." Writes Lee: "names and speech thus reveal the tension of modern life between enduring tradition and impoverishing encroachments. And the encroachments themselves take the form of language. Against the fragmented 'historical'

language that remains of old family names, old savings, old plays and poems, is thrust the language of the modern age. . . ." (214).

No longer able to come together within the realm of discourse, the characters of Between the Acts are precariously united through the wordless and the abstract in music, noises and images: "'Thoughts without words,'" asks Bartholomew, "Can that be?" (44). Words are reduced to inchoate sounds, which, failing to produce meaning, overlap like planes in a Cubist painting: "the words were like the first peal of a chime of bells. As the first peals, you hear the second; as the second peals, you hear the third" (20). Language, moreover, becomes intimidating. Little is known of Miss La Trobe, for instance, but she is said to use "strong Language" (46). The beginning of the pageant also conveys a sense of ominousness: "Words this afternoon ceased to lie flat in the sentence. They rose, became menacing and shook their fists at you. This afternoon he wasn't Giles Oliver come to see the villagers acts their annual pageant; manacled to a rock he was. . . ." (47). Pictures, on the other hand, because they operate through images rather than words, offer the potential for safety: "The picture looked at nobody. The picture drew them down the paths of silence" (37).

In post-Victorian industrial society it is the mind-numbing regularity of machinery that gives life its coherence. Without words, the dull clang of the bell becomes emblematic of peoples' subservience to an impersonal order which they have long forgotten to question:

'The day breaks us with its hard mallet blows' 'The office' (some were thinking) 'compels disparity. Scattered, shattered, hither thither summoned by the bell. 'Ping-ping-ping' that's the phone. 'Forward!' 'Serving!'--that's the shop.' So we answer to the

infernal, age-long and eternal order issued from on high. And obey. (89)

Music is offered as another potential source of unification as it "makes us see the hidden, join the broken" (89). Yet to the audience it becomes indistinguishable from the drone of passing aeroplanes which, forebodingly, cause Reverend Streatfield's words to be "cut in two" (140). During the pageant it is less the music played than the monotonous "tick, tick, tick" of the gramophone which "seemed to hold them together, tranced" (63). Music is also tied to the pervasive "rhythm" of the novel, which perpetually strives to absorb its conflicting dialectics. And yet this rhythmical synthesis is always prevented: "the rhythm always breaks before the goal is reached. The reader remains at the end between the acts, after any previous act of unification and prior to the next hypothetical one" (Hillis Miller 220). To achieve unification then, Miss La Trobe's audience is urged to "break the rhythm and forget the rhyme" (135). By the last act, "The Present: Ourselves," language has been completely replaced with silence: "try ten mins. of present time" (130) while the first sounds heard in Miss La Trobe's modern period are the polytonal rhythms of jazz music, itself a kind of musical Cubism:

The tune changed; snapped; broke; jagged. Fox-trot was it? Jazz? Anyhow the rhythm kicked, reared, snapped short. What a jangle and a jingle! . . . What a cackle, a cacophony!! Nothing ended. So abrupt. And corrupt. Such an outrage; such an insult; And not plain. Very up to date, all the same. What is her game? To disrupt? Jog and trot? Jerk and smirk? Put the finger to the noose? Squint and pry? Peak and spy? O the irreverence of the generation which is only momentarily--thanks be--'the young.'

The young, who can't make, but only break; shiver into splinters
the old vision; smash to atoms what was whole. (133)

Using the pageant to consolidate the past, the audience hopes to regain a coherent sense of self and community. Yet the colourful achievement of literary history: the Elizabethan, Restoration and Victorian eras, serves only to emphasize the confused, muttering cacophony of the present. Just as Jacob in Jacob's Room does not seem to equal the sum total of our perceptions of him, the villagers of Between the Acts find that they are not necessarily the linear, progressive achievement of their own place in history. Instead, the consolidation of identity will require an act of creation. Nor can people connect to their history in meaningful ways. It is thus no accident that Lucy's book is called the "Outline" of History (my emphasis), since all it can provide is a dim scaffolding of the past that does not penetrate to the "truth" of experience. In attempting to access their past, what is more, people risk getting caught in an endless chain of textuality with ever-diminishing reference to the external world--an echo of Jacob's ironic essay-question "Does History Consist of the Biographies of Great Men?" Looking at her bookshelf, Isa speculates:

There they were, reflecting. What? . . . Yet as a person with a raging tooth runs her eye in a chemist shop over green bottles with gilt scrolls on them lest one of them may contain a cure, she considered: Keats and Shelley; Yeats and Donne. Or perhaps not a poem; a life. The life of Garibaldi. The life of Lord Palmerston. Or perhaps not a person's life; a county's The Antiquities of Durham; The Proceedings of the Archaeological Society of Nottingham. Or not a life at all, but science-- Eddington, Darwin, or Jeans. (18-19)

Yet all of these prove insufficient: "none of them stopped her toothache. For her generation the newspaper was a book" (19). Instead of having a sense of historical continuity then, people feel trapped in predictable, repetitive sequences from which they cannot escape:

Every summer, for seven summers now, Isa had heard the same words; about the hammer and the nails; the pageant and the weather. Every year they said, would it be wet or fine; and every year it was--one or the other. The same chime followed the same chime, only this year beneath the chime she heard: "The girl screamed and hit him about the face with a hammer" (20).

Using the hammer image as a point of intersection between the endless preparation for the pageant and the rape story reported in The Times, Woolf captures the latent sense of violence inherent in the loss of a progressive historical discourse. Placing this problem within its wider modernist context, Quinones notes that for writers such as Woolf the old values can no longer satisfy: "something has happened to the historical momentum and sense of coherence. And this is the modernist's point of departure. Hovering above the line of human experience and yawning beneath it is empty space" (Mapping 33). Even nature emulates this crisis: "the flat fields glared green yellow, blue yellow, red yellow, then blue again. The repetition was senseless, hideous, stupefying" (BA 53).

This passage underscores the primary crisis of the novel, which asks how we can create anything new out of the "orts, scraps and fragments" handed down to us from the past. As Hillis Miller succinctly points out, the novel "dramatizes not so much the problem of interpreting a repetitive sequence which already exists as the problem of adding new elements to such a sequence and so keeping the human history from disintegrating into

unconnected fragments" (203). The ability of people to deal with the formlessness of the present, moreover, helps guide them toward their even more uncertain future: "the future shadowed their present, like the sun coming through the many-veined transparent leaf; a criss-cross of lines making no pattern" (86).

Throughout the novel, the vertical compression of space triumphs over the horizontal stretch of time. History is lived spatially through the fragmented remains of it found in daily experience, while these fragments, in turn, metonymically convey the missing wholes of which they were once a part. Stewart calls the language and syntax of *Between the Acts*: "an esthetic of elimination, such as Pound and Fenollosa derive from the Chinese ideogram" (85). What is lacking is simply the imagination which will render them whole again. Mrs Swithin herself emphasizes the importance of this process: "Imagine? . . . How right! Actors show us too much. The Chinese, you know, put a dagger on the table and that's a battle" (104). And, as she shows William Dodge the nursery in her home: "Words raised themselves and became symbolical. 'The cradle of our race,' she seemed to say" (56). People live daily with these vestigial traces of the past. Mrs Sands' house, for instance, still has some of the features of the chapel it had before the Reformation: "and that chapel had become a larder, changing, like the cat's name, as religion changed" (27). Customs have also left their mark, as Old Oliver, bowing deeply over Mrs Manresa's hand, thinks how "a century ago, he would have kissed it" (32). More recent events are also accessed through the metonymic perception of objects. Hence Isa's remembrance of her meeting with Giles during a fishing trip is occasioned by his eating fillet of sole (38-9). The play also, once it has become a part of the past, is apprehended spatially by the audience: "still the play hung in the sky of the mind--moving,

diminishing, but still there . . . They all looked at the play; Isa, Giles and Mr Oliver. Each of course saw something different. In another moment it would be beneath the horizon, gone to join the other plays" (154). The constancy of the natural world is also a visual reminder of the immense stretch of history. The view at Hogben's Folly, for instance, has not changed through the generations, "1833 was still true in 1939" and will remain unchanged for future ones: "'That's what makes a view so sad,' said Mrs Swithin . . . 'It'll be there . . . when we're not'" (42). The birds who come every year are also a reminder of the time "before there was a channel, when the earth . . . was a riot of rhododendrons . . . " (82). Nevertheless, these physical manifestations of the past do not provide access to its inner meaning, and what is true of the physical world is also true of people. Looking at Mrs Manresa, for instance, Isa notes: "her hat, her rings, her finger nails red as roses . . . were there for all to see. But not her life history. That was only scraps and fragments to all of them . . . " (33).

This spatial superimposition of time also has the effect of creating juxtapositions and connections between civilized society and its more barbaric, savage undertones. Finding a sharp stone which appeared to have been "cut by a savage for an arrow," for example, Giles is reminded of a stone-kicking a game he played as a child, which he then re-enacts, associating each kick with those human failings he is experiencing in his personal life: lust, perversion, and cowardice. Reaching the tenth kick, Giles is confronted with the horrific sight of a snake choking on a dying toad: "it was birth the wrong way round--a monstrous inversion" (75). By juxtaposing images of depraved morality, sin and savagery on Giles' mundane domestic squabbles, Woolf creates an effect analogous to the so-called "primitivism" of early Analytic Cubism. In Picasso's famous "Demoiselles d'Avignon," for example,

prostitutes' faces are painted in the manner of African tribal masks, linking their brash eroticism with dark, "primitive" desires.²⁶ Like the Cubists, Roger Fry and Clive Bell also admired African art, taking its non-mimetic volumes as proof of the eternal qualities of form over representation. Writing to Vanessa Bell in 1920, Woolf herself records going to see a show of "negro carvings" in Shaftesbury Avenue: "there is a good deal doing in the art world. A show of Negro carvings at the book club--the X group . . . I went to see the carvings and I found them dismal and impressive, but heaven knows what real feeling I have about anything after hearing Roger discourse. I dimly see that something in their style might be written" (L2: 429).

Like Picasso, Miss La Trobe removes the frame from her work of art, blurring the distinction between reality and fiction. By compelling the audience to take an active part in her creation, Miss La Trobe eliminates the process of objectification, the difference between "table" and "tableau," that allows us to turn the chaos of reality into the comfort of an artistic paradigm. Says Kahnweiler: "man is possessed by an urge to objectivate; he wants to 'see something' in the work of art which should--and he is sure of this--represent something" (qtd. in Chipp 257). This tendency is perfectly illustrated in *Old Oliver*, who, observing the landscape, attempts to place the image in a closed frame: "over the edge he surveyed the landscape--flowing fields, heath and woods. Framed, they became a picture. Had he been a painter, he would have fixed his easel here, where the country, barred by trees, looked like a picture" (14). What *Old Oliver* and the rest of the audience desire is thus the paradigmatic certitude of traditional painting, drama and writing. In denying them this, Miss La Trobe joins the ranks of modern artists including Woolf, Fry and the Cubists, who rejected the easy answers of decorative art. Woolf,

to be sure, would have agreed with Gleizes and Metzingers' articulation of the problems of this art, which, they claimed:

Exists only by virtue of its destination; it is animated only by the relations existing between it and determined objects. Essentially dependent, necessarily incomplete, it must in the first place satisfy the mind so as not to distract it from the spectacle which justifies and completes it. It is a medium, an instrument." (qtd. in Chipp 210)

Like the Cubists, Miss La Trobe replaces the sign (the play) with the signified (the audience), reversing the normal configuration of the representational model. Attending the play in the open air, the audience becomes particularly susceptible to the breakdown of these barriers. William Dodge and Mrs Swithin, for example, observing the start of the play from behind the safety of a window, attempt to symbolically place a mediative barrier between themselves and the encroaching pageant: "the audience was assembling. But they, looking down from the window, were truants, detached. Together they leant half out of the window" (56).

As with Jacob's Room, Between the Acts emphasizes a Cubist multiplicity of view-points that make up the single image. In this case, however, it is the fragmented perceptions of the audience which precipitate this analytical deconstruction: "all these eyes, expanding and narrowing, some adapted to light, others to darkness, looked from different angles and edges" (76). Woolf's use of the mirror and window images has a similar effect, allowing the reader to view several angles of the narrative simultaneously while drawing our attention to the process of artistic mediation itself. At the start of the novel then, Isa is seen looking at herself "in front of the three-folded mirror, so that she could see three separate

versions of her . . . face" (14). Beyond the glass she can also see the countryside and her son, a vision which makes her think "inner love was in the eyes; outer love on the dressing table." The outer reflections of the mirror, therefore, come to parallel the inner reflections of consciousness, both of which interact Cubistically as segments of a single plane (Stewart, "Cubist" 72). A mirror, like a picture frame, functions to delimit the boundaries of the perceived image. It can also provide an ironic reversal of this function, however, as the cracked mirrors held up to the audience by the players show. Where the picture frame normally confirms the unity of the composition within it, Miss La Trobe's mirrors betray this configuration by erasing the boundaries between work and viewer, giving a splintered, fragmented sense of both. The resulting effect of this is a striking passage descriptively analogous to the visual style of a Cubist portrait:

Out they leapt, jerked, skipped. Flashing, dazzling, dancing, jumping. Now old Bart . . . he was caught. Now Manresa. Here a nose . . . There a skirt . . . Then trousers only . . . Now perhaps a face . . . Ourselves? But that's cruel. To snap us as we are, before we've had time to assume . . . And only, too, in parts . . . That's what's so distorting and upsetting and utterly unfair. (133)

Like a Cubist painting, the mirrors reflect a two-dimensional image while maintaining the illusion of depth. Woolf had in fact experimented with the mirror technique in this way in an earlier story, "The Lady in the Looking Glass: A Reflection" which bears an interesting relationship to the experiments in Between the Acts.²⁷ In the story, tension is created between the looking glass image which seems to reflect objects so accurately that they "seem held there in their reality inescapably" and, on the other hand, the woman's actual experience of the room, in which "nothing stayed the same

for two seconds together" (221). Moving between these two versions of reality, the narrator finds it "a strange contrast--all changing here, all stillness there. (One could not help looking from one to the other" (221). A dialectic is thus set up between our experience of reality and the framed images we make of that reality. And while the mirror image, like the traditional painting, seems to offer the viewer the "trance of immortality," the illusion is just as abruptly ended: "half an hour ago the mistress of the house, Isabella Tyson, had gone down the grass path . . . and had vanished, sliced off by the gilt rim of the looking glass" (222). With the visceral "slicing" off of the image then, the mirror is converted into a metaphor for the artistic process itself:

A large black form loomed into the looking-glass; blotted out everything, strewed the table with a packet of marble tablets veined with pink and grey, and was gone. But the picture was entirely altered. For the moment it was unrecognisable and irrational and entirely out of focus. One could not relate these tablets to any human purpose. And then by degrees some logical process set to work on them and began ordering and arranging them and bringing them into the fold of common experience. One realised at last that they were merely letters . . . There they lay on the marble-topped table, all dripping with light and colour at first and crude and unabsorbed. And then it was strange to see how they were drawn in and arranged and composed and made part of the picture and granted that stillness and immortality which the looking-glass conferred. They lay there invested with a new reality and significance and with a greater heaviness, too, as if it would have needed a chisel to dislodge them from a table. (223)

This "slicing" of the image at the frame's edge is also used in Between the Acts. In both instances the device serves as a reminder of the Cubist lesson that representation--in the manner of the Renaissance "window"--inevitably means distortion. In Mrs Swithin's home, for example, William Dodge sees the two of them "cut off from their bodies," while "their eyes smiled, their bodiless eyes, at their eyes in the glass" (56). And, on the same page, the arriving crowd is seen mediated through the window, shown only from the waist down: "old ladies gingerly advanced black legs with silver-buckled shoes; old men striped trousers. Young men in shorts leapt out on one side; girls with skin-coloured legs on the other" (56).

A Cubist painting from 1909 to 1911, according to Edward Fry, involved four processes: "a direct visual observation of the world, previous knowledge of the motif, if any; mastery of the classical conventions for representation; and the simultaneous Cubist transformation of those conventions as the motif was being represented" ("Picasso" 298). This same pattern applies to Between the Acts, where, as Hillis Miller notes: "the constant reiteration of the themes of failure and discord produces a slight feeling of frustration, as if one were being blocked from completing a familiar sequence" (221). This transformation must be completed by Miss La Trobe, whose task is to disrupt and provoke an audience "swathed in conventions" (51). Her pageant disturbs those formal norms through which the audience's "a priori" assumptions are consolidated: "The play began. Was it, or was it not, the play?" (59). Like a Cubist artist, Miss La Trobe leaves tantalizing traces of conventional pageant form while thwarting our ability to carry these paradigms through to their natural conclusions: "she had gashed the scene here. Just as she had brewed emotion, she split it" (72). Faced with these disruptions, the audience members attempt to maintain their own part in

convention by separating themselves further from the pageant. During the intervals, therefore: "They kept their distance from the dressing-room; they respected the conventions" (111). When distance does not succeed the audience copes with the play by normalizing it, reducing its ideas to parlor conversation. As we read in an overheard fragment of dialogue: "the very la'est notion, so I'm told is, nothing's solid" (144).

Of course Woolf had had first-hand experience with an audience profoundly disturbed by works of art thirty years earlier at Fry's two Post-Impressionist exhibitions. The fact that she was writing Fry's biography at the same time as Between the Acts may perhaps have served as a reminder of the trials Fry had undergone in order to impart the value of his aesthetic views. "It is difficult in 1939," Woolf wrote in her biography of Fry,

. . . when a great hospital is benefitting from a centenary exhibition of Cézanne's works, and the gallery is daily crowded with devout and submissive worshippers, to realise what violent emotions those pictures excited less than thirty years ago. The pictures are the same; it is the public that has changed. But there can be no doubt about the fact. The public in 1910 was thrown into paroxysms of rage and laughter. They went from Cézanne to Gauguin and from Gauguin to Van Gogh, they went from Picasso to Signac, and from Derain to Friesz, and they were infuriated. (Roger Fry 153-54)

Woolf speaks further of Fry's frustration with those members of the "cultivated classes" who had listened to his lectures on the Old Masters with great interest, but who refused to accept as legitimate the living artists he was excited about: "they cared only for what could be labelled and classified 'genuine.' Their interest in his lectures had been a pose; art was to them

merely a social asset" (158). Indeed, many critics have interpreted Miss La Trobe as a self-parody of Virginia Woolf, and while this may or may not be the case, Woolf certainly places Miss La Trobe on a level with Fry and the Post-Impressionist painters, who "without caring a rap for their reputations as men of learning and culture, were trying to penetrate beneath appearance to reality" (Roger Fry 174).

Perhaps the best example of the novel's subversion of convention comes from Woolf's use of the play-within-the-play device. While this traditional trope would be familiar to Miss La Trobe's audience as well as to Woolf's readers, she takes it one step further, transforming it into a Cubist chain of ever-increasing artifice that travels from the reader to the audience attending the play and finally to the play itself (Hillis Miller 210). The motif also complicates the novel's ongoing internal dialectic between nature and fiction by reflexively layering one within the other until they become indistinguishable, thus emulating the Cubist conundrum of being at once inside and outside the object depicted. As Miss La Trobe thinks, "another play always lay behind the play she had just written" (50). The actual play is also about other plays of its kind--hence Woolf's lengthy recreation of a Restoration drama, which, in spite of its seeming authenticity, is nevertheless not the genuine thing. It is, instead, a kind of Cubist papier collé which has been inserted in the original. Other devices are used to blur the line between audience and players. The mirror scene, the mingling of actors and audience after the play, as well as the frequent overlapping of the thoughts of the audience, those of Miss La Trobe, the narrator's statements and the actors speeches--all of these draw increasingly complex lines of connection between these different entities. Significantly, the phrase "orts, scraps and fragments" is a refrain uttered at every narrative level in the novel.

Initially, however, the clear artifice of the pageant serves mainly to emphasize the reader's belief in the "reality" of the first level of narration which frames the story: the domestic squabbles of Isa, Giles, Lucy and Bart. Yet this is thrown into doubt at the novel's conclusion when the theatrical paradigm is extended into the personal lives of these characters. Thus, as Miss La Trobe begins to conceive of her new play at the end of the novel, Isa is found thinking: "Surely it was time someone invented a new plot, or that the author came out from the bushes . . ." (156). Yet while Miss La Trobe appears to be concocting her play from a narratorial point outside this fictional paradigm, Giles and Isa ironically continue to live within it. The scene in which Miss La Trobe "hears" the first words of her play, for example, is "answered" in a moment occurring simultaneously between Giles and Isa and culminating in the metaphorical gesture which ends it: "the curtain rose. They spoke" (159). The reader is thus implicated in an ever-deepening chain of fictions, in which his/her relation to Between the Acts will end up on the same level as that of the audience to the pageant within the novel. A surreptitious change in pronoun at the end of the novel completes this subtle shift from text to reader: "the church bells always stopped, leaving you to ask: Won't there be another note" (my emphasis 150). Writes Hillis Miller:

Just beyond the margin of the text, in an extrapolation into the void where there are not yet more words, Miss La Trobe's fiction and the reality of the life of Isa and Giles will become indistinguishable. The text the reader would be reading then would be simultaneously Woolf's novel and a fiction created by one of the characters in that novel. In its end, or just beyond its end, Between the Acts becomes a single verbal surface which

merges the two levels of 'real' people and play kept separate earlier in the novel. (212)

The significance of the title of the work now becomes evident, for by the novel's end it is impossible to say when we are "between" acts and when the acts themselves take place. The scope and structure of the novel allows that these terms can be interpreted in a variety of ways. As Geoffrey Hartman notes, "everything of importance tends to happen between the acts, between each finite or external sign."²⁸ It is within the "gaps" of the known that the creation of the new takes place--the symbolic space in which the audience combines knowledge and vision in order to redefine them.

Far from the cyclical, integrative form of The Waves, Woolf creates a sense of textual jaggedness and angularity in Between the Acts that becomes a part of the novel's Cubist texture. Here, says Stewart, "the edge between images becomes more pronounced, giving a brittle, kaleidoscopic effect" ("Cubist" 68). This effect is achieved through the fragmentation of language and dialogue already discussed as well as through description and the sudden shifting and breaking of scene: "To part? No. Compelled from the ends of the horizon; recalled from the edge of appalling crevasses; they crashed; solved; united" (137). Textual "asymmetry" is also created through an undue emphasis on the number three, a configuration recalling the geometrical figure of a triangle and which is perhaps the shape most commonly found in Cubist painting. Words are repeated three times: "Chuff, chuff, chuff"; "beat, beat, beat"; "faster, faster, faster." There is also Isa's three-fold mirror; bells which peal three times (20); Mrs Swithin's sandwiches which are cut "trimmed, triangular" (29). Even silence is found in triplicate: "empty, empty, empty; silent, silent, silent" and "then is heard One voice, another voice, a third voice . . . impetuously, impatiently, protestingly" (31).

According to Isa, "three emotions made the ply of human life" (70); during the play the character of "Reason" has helpers arrange around her "the three sides of a room" (93), while at another point the audience hears a "triple melody" as the great clock face shows hands "pointing three minutes to the hour" (100).

The Cubist structure of Between the Acts fuses interlocking, dialectical planes of reality that are normally kept separate. The confused relation between audience and play is complicated even further by the intrusion of the natural world into the narrative. Writes Stewart: "the dissolving of rational distinctions between human and animal leads to a mingling of discordant voices in a single chorus. Thus nature and art, animal and human, primeval and present intersect on a single plane of reality" ("Cubist" 77). It becomes impossible to say whether art imitates nature or nature imitates art: "the lawn was flat as the floor of a theatre. The terrace, rising, made a natural stage. The trees barred the stage like pillars. And the human figure was seen to great advantage against a background of sky" (59). Keeping with their belief in the sanctity of the artistic paradigm, the audience is unwilling to allow this random contingency into a production which is supposedly planned, purposeful, and structured. Yet Miss La Trobe's ultimate goal is to completely dissolve the distinction between art and life, to "write a play without an audience--the play" (130). When the human voices of the play fail, the voices of nature enter and complete the scene: "as the illusion petered out, the cows took up the burden. One had lost her calf. In the very nick of time she lifted her great moon-eyed head and bellowed . . . the cows annihilated the gap; bridged the distance; filled the emptiness and continued the emotion" (103-4). As if in response, the human world comes to parallel the animal world: "suddenly the cows stopped; lowered their heads, and began browsing.

Simultaneously the audience lowered their heads and read their programmes" (104). Nature and language overlap also, as when Miss La Trobe's attempt to "douche" the audience with present-time is ironically met by a sudden shower situated climactically within the play. Personified, the rain then becomes the "sudden and universal" tears of all humanity. But nature holds its dangers as well. Miss La Trobe fears, for instance, that the drowsy, impressionistic landscape will divert her audience from the part they must play in her production: "How tempting, how very tempting, to let the view triumph; to reflect its ripple; to let their own minds ripple; to let outlines elongate and pitch over" (52). At one point she even wishes she had a "back-cloth to hang between the trees--to shut out cows, swallows, present time!" (131).

The audience's discomfort is acerbated when the play is not given a formal conclusion, an indeterminacy which prolongs the overlap between nature, art and reality. A final gesture is required to confirm their belief in the separateness of these realms: "it was an awkward moment. How to make an end? Whom to thank? Every sound in nature was painfully audible, the swish of the trees; the gulp of a cow; even the skim of the swallows over the grass could be heard. But no one spoke. Whom could they make responsible? . . . Was there no one" (141).

This conflation of different planes of reality is part of an overall pattern in Between the Acts that emphasizes themes of similarity and dissimilarity in dialectical opposites. The continual merging and parting of paradigms creates a Cubist confusion between depth and surface, nature and artifice related to the two-dimensional "flattening" of perspective. This term is, in fact, used frequently in the novel. We find, for instance, that "the view laid bare by the sun was flattened, silenced, still" (52); and in another scene with Giles: "so

one thing led to another; and the conglomeration of things pressed you flat; held you fast, like a fish in water" (38). As with Woolf's other works and as with Cubism, what is of paramount importance in Between the Acts is the degree to which an artistic creation will emerge out of the dynamic process found in the interlocking relations of these facets--and in both cases it is the artist who has the power to momentarily unite the amorphous, shattered fragments of life and give them form. Miss La Trobe, for example, is said to be she "who seethes wandering bodies and floating voices in a cauldron, and makes rise up from its amorphous mass a recreated world. Her moment was on her--her glory" (112).

Movement and rhythm are created through the continual oscillation between "unity--dispersity," between the abstract "we" and the "I" of the text. This dialectic takes place on every level of diegesis, is even played out in the lives of characters. Thus Old Bart is a "separatist" who sees "orts and fragments" simply as orts and fragments, while Lucy is said to be a "unifier" who attempts to sort them out (Hillis Miller 219). Writes Stewart: "As with the disjunction of planes in Cubism, gaps in narrative structure put more pressure on the reader to participate in the formative process. . . . The form is a conceptual challenge, the outcome of which remains uncertain. It is dialectic itself, the unceasing struggle of the mind with history, self and reality, that constitutes the novel's subject" ("Cubist" 69). Unlike To the Lighthouse, which ends with the affirmation of a momentary unity: "I have had my vision"; the final "un . . . dis" that emerges from the "unity--dispersity" of the gurgling gramophone ends this dialectic on a negative note, thus implying that the process must begin again. Further, the initiation of discourse: "they spoke" at the end of the novel, indicates that the artistic process will not be completed within the boundaries of the text. "If there is

something missing in the text, then there may be no center, no ur-pattern, just echoing differences." writes Hillis Miller (219). In Between the Acts, even more so than in the other Woolf novels, there are no fixed points from which the reader can convince herself that any interpretation is the correct one. As one audience member speculates, the new status of the work of art, like that of Cubism, is paradoxical: "and if we're left asking questions, isn't it a failure, as a play? I must say I like to feel sure if I go to the theatre, that I've grasped the meaning . . . Or was that, perhaps, what she meant? . . . that if we don't jump to conclusions, if you think, and I think perhaps one day, thinking differently, we shall think the same?" (145).

The goals of the Synthetic Cubists were to create a new aesthetic reality from the combination of the "orts, scraps and fragments" of the world they saw around them. So in Between the Acts the audience must attempt to create its own unique identity out of the texts and memories of the past. We return once more to Hillis Miller, who writes:

The novel constantly interrogates its own order, in a self-reflective reversal of which it contains many examples on a small and large scale. In this turning back, oneness becomes duplicity, in a defiance of representational logic which some critics have compared to a Möbius strip. A given passage functions as the fictional representation of a reality that fiction speaks of as lying outside itself and as being only named by its language. At the same time, the passage calls attention to itself as part of design of words which generates its own intrinsic meaning (204-205).

Hillis Miller's reference to the Möbius strip should be noted for the important connection it makes to Cubism. Gombrich, for one, explains what he calls

the "quintessence" of Cubism using similar configurations, like "Thiéry's figure," "Fraser's spiral" and classical mosaics (240-43). Like Woolf's novel and like Cubism, these figures subvert a consistent reading by preventing our finding a point of rest from which to start the process of interpretation.

Indeed, Between the Acts itself holds an interesting reflexive relation to the body of Woolf's previous work as a whole, as fragmented threads of her other novels and stories frequently emerge from its splintered surface.

According to Stewart: "all Woolf's work is, in a sense, a palimpsest, or series of planes, that interact with or reflect each other, to form a complex whole and 'show the light through.' The nine novels are segments of a lifework that is the ultimate, if oblique, expression of its author" ("Cubist" 84). Thus, some critics have seen the pageant, with its centuries-wide scope and compressed time frame, as a dramatic enactment of Orlando (Guiget 322).

There are also distinct echoes of To the Lighthouse--notably Mrs Swithin's, "if it's fine" (20)--but also of The Years, Jacob's Room, Mrs Dalloway and "Kew Gardens." While this may or may not be intentional (certainly Woolf was known to repeat herself) it nevertheless provides an interesting illustration of the problems of creativity explored in Between the Acts. Clearly, Miss La Trobe's central problem--of how to create something new out of what is already known--was also Woolf's.

5. Post-Impressionism as Theme: To the Lighthouse

If Jacob's Room, Mrs Dalloway and Between the Acts embody the paradoxes and problems of a Cubist reading, then To the Lighthouse thematizes these, making them the subject rather the object of its discourse. Returning for a final time to Perloff's distinction between poets who write a discourse of indeterminacy and those who write about indeterminacy, To the Lighthouse may be said to occupy the latter category, participating in a Cubist discourse through "a rendering of the irrational into the concretion of the symbolic" (Perloff 27). The indeterminacy that the novel writes about is the search for an appropriate paradigm to express, aesthetically, the problem of "Subject and Object and the nature of reality." While Mr Ramsay's preoccupation is often interpreted by critics as the principle example of his frigid, masculine Cartesianism, it is nevertheless also Lily Briscoe's--as well as Woolf's--primary concern as an artist.

What I would like to suggest is that To the Lighthouse is a novel which, to some degree, writes about the writing of Woolf's other novels. In other words, where these latter place us inside of Woolf's own canvas, as it were, To the Lighthouse permits us a glance at the conceptual process on the other side of the easel. To do this, Woolf uses the figure of the thinker/artist--Lily Briscoe--as the agent who will extract meaning from reality and create the metaphors expressive of this reality. The painterly metaphor, furthermore, is particularly appropriate given the way in which Woolf's narrative strategy is conjoined to Lily Briscoe's painting, making closure at the end of the novel--"I have had my vision"--ultimately dependent on the successful translation from one realm to another (Novak xii). This final chapter will thus focus on Lily's painting, showing how the narrative directs

the reader towards her emerging Post-Impressionist vision, and further, how this articulation leads Woolf closer to a Cubist aesthetic.

Interestingly enough, this unanticipated conclusion creates a new status for To the Lighthouse in the context of Woolf's Post-Impressionist discourse. By taking a more didactic, more explanatory role, the novel can be read in the same way as the Cubist manifestos—as a text about that discourse. In Torgovnick's terms, its use of the visual arts is predominantly ideological and interpretive: ideological to the degree that the visual arts embody major themes in the fiction, and interpretive in that it plays on both the reader's and the characters' respective reactions to visual stimuli for its effect. The exception to this pattern is the middle section, "Time Passes," which holds relevance for a Cubist reading quite apart from the basic narrative of the rest of the novel. In this discussion, I will also refer to Orlando, since Woolf's treatment of time and experience in To the Lighthouse suggests an interesting comparison with parts of that text. Orlando's Cubist vision of the twentieth century not only reflects the splintered amorphousness of "Time Passes," but it also confirms the agency of art in finding appropriate forms to express these changing notions of "reality."

A number of clues indicate early on that Lily Briscoe is a Post-Impressionist, rather than an Impressionist painter. Initially, we are aware only that she is one of a series of artists, chief amongst them the unseen Mr Paunceforte, who have recently started to arrive at the Ramsays' summer home in order to paint the view of the sea and the lighthouse. Describing their style, Mrs Ramsay tells Charles Tansley that: "Since Mr Paunceforte had been there, three years before, all the pictures were like that . . . green and grey, with lemon-coloured sailing-boats, and pink women on the beach"; and further, that they "mixed their own colours, and then they ground them, and

then they put damp cloths on them to keep them moist" (16). The totality of details given: the pale, suffused colours used by the painters (a "soft mound of green or pink"), the fact that some of them are French, that they paint "en plein air" in "Panama hat and yellow boots, seriously, softly, absorbedly" scenes of leisure and relaxation among the monied classes--indicates clearly that Woolf wants the reader to associate them with the Impressionists.

Appropriate to his ignorance of art, Charles Tansley is uncertain how to react to these paintings. His awkward mental description of them reinforces those features already implied by Woolf: "So . . . she meant him to see that that man's picture was skimpy, was that what one said? The colours weren't solid? Was that what one said? . . . he was coming to see himself and everything he had ever known gone crooked a little. It was awfully strange" (17).

In her early attempts to paint her picture, Lily's work appears to be overshadowed by the example set by her Impressionist precursors. And yet there are signs that she is not entirely comfortable with their methods: "she would not have considered it honest to tamper with the bright violet and the staring white, since she saw them like that, fashionable though it was, since Mr Paunceforte's visit, to see everything pale, elegant, semi-transparent. Then beneath the colour there was shape" (23). Unlike the Impressionists, who painted rapidly in order to capture the effects of light and colour at a particular point in time, Lily is torn between the desire to reproduce mimetically what she "sees" and to undertake the slow process of conceptualization that will turn these visions into more abstract aesthetic creations:

She could see it all so clearly, so commandingly, when she looked: it was when she took her brush in hand that the whole

thing changed. It was in that moment's flight between the picture and her canvas that the demons set on her who often brought her to the verge of tears and made this passage from conception to work as dreadful as any down a dark passage for a child. Such she often felt herself--struggling against terrific odds to maintain her courage; to say: "but this is what I see; this is what I see," and so to clasp some miserable remnant of her vision to her breast, which a thousand forces did their best to pluck from her. (23)

Lily's first glance at her partially completed work sends her into despair as these conflicting tendencies between "vision" and "design" come to the surface. It is at this point that she realizes her desire to create something different from what convention requires: "she could have done it differently of course; the colour could have been thinned and faded; the shapes etherealized; that was how Paunceforte would have seen it. But then she did not see it like that. She saw colour burning on a framework of steel; the light of a butterfly's wing lying upon the arches of a cathedral" (57).

Lily's struggle is directed towards the predominant paradigmatic focus of the first section of the novel, which, based on the ideally objective Renaissance notion of "the window" discussed earlier, suggests traditional notions of transparency between the perceiving self (subject) and the perceived world (object) (Levenson, *Fate* 175). Like the clear, undistorted rectilinear image of the window, Mr Ramsay's realist, linear epistemology assumes an equal, unproblematic status for "the nature of reality." Literally looking at his family through the window of their house, for example:

He stopped to light his pipe . . . and as one raises one's eyes from a page in an express train and sees a farm, a tree, a cluster of

cottages as an illustration, a confirmation of something on the printed page to which one returns, fortified, and satisfied, so without his distinguishing either his son or his wife, the sight of them fortified him and satisfied him and consecrated his effort to arrive at a perfectly clear understanding of the problem which now engaged the energies of his splendid mind. (emphasis mine 39)

The image captures Mr Ramsay's desire to objectify the world around him. Framed like a Renaissance painting in the confines of a limited, definable space, and mediated by the window pane, Mr Ramsay finds himself at his ideal vantage point as an observer: from the outside looking in.

Mrs Ramsay, in contrast, is a destroyer of temporal and spatial order. If Mr Ramsay's perception is tied mostly to the Renaissance, then hers is more Cubist. Even her beauty--remarked upon by everybody--is not of the conventional kind. There is, we are told, an elusive quality about her: "something incongruous to be worked into the harmony of her face" that defies solidity (35). Nor will she sit comfortably within the frames which others attempt to impose upon her. As Lily paints her, for example--also through the window--she has trouble remembering to keep still, her head being seen as "outlined absurdly by the gilt frame" beneath which she sits (35). Indeed, part of her occupation at this time is in encouraging James to find another picture in the catalogue of the Army and Navy stores to "cut out." What is more, we find that having carelessly thrown her green shawl over the painting hanging above her, she has flippantly covered what is said to be an "authenticated masterpiece of Michael Angelo" (35-6). Later on, this same green shawl will be used to cover the boar's skull in Cam and James' room, thus resolving their dispute over it through an assurance that there is no

reason why it cannot be thought of as two different things simultaneously (132-33).

In spite of her iconoclasm, however, it is ironically to his wife that Mr Ramsay, whom "Charles Tansley thought . . . the greatest metaphysician of the time" comes to when he needs to be assured of the "reality" of the world around him: "Flashing her needles, confident, upright, she created drawing-room and kitchen, set them all aglow . . . glancing round about her, out of the window, into the room, at James himself, she assured him, beyond a shadow of a doubt, by her laugh, her poise, her competence . . . that it was real; the house was full" (44-45).

It is during the supper scene of the same section that the window, and the metaphorical condition it represents, begins to be transformed: "for the night was now shut off by panes of glass, which, far from giving any accurate view of the outside world, rippled it so strangely that here, inside the room, seemed to be order and dry land; there, outside, a reflection in which things wavered and vanished, waterily" (112). The reflective subjectivity of the mirror image is thus substituted for the objective transparency of the window. And if the window, with its clear daylight world of "facts" is associated with Mr Ramsay, then its transformation at night into the mirror--like the lighthouse's transformation from a stark, straight tower into a searching "eye"--must then be seen as Mrs Ramsay's domain. In place of the truth of being declared by the window, suggests Levenson, the mirror now offers the truth of seeing (Fate 177).

But as Levenson has astutely pointed out, while both window and mirror metaphors represent different means of conceiving of the "nature of reality," both are alike in that they rely on an essential congruity between perceptions of the self and the perceived world (177). In the middle section,

"Time Passes," however, where the chaos of war and the power of unleashed natural forces together gain ascendancy over the man-made world, both metaphors begin to lose their meaning. It is here that the underlying tenuousness of our ordering metaphors is revealed, for as one critic has written: "the most important power of metaphor is that it holds fused in a condition of stability and synthesis the 'truth' that is far too fluid in its natural state to be captured, comprehended and controlled" (Spencer 94). In this ten-year lapse, consequently, we find that "no image . . . comes readily to hand bringing the night to order and making the world reflect the compass of the soul" (TL 146). Instead, there are only memories of "how once the looking-glass had held a face; had held a world hollowed out in which a figure turned, a hand flashed, the door opened" (147); all that remains now is "a form from which life had parted; solitary like a pool at evening far distant, seen from a train window, vanishing so quickly that the pool, pale in the evening, is scarcely robbed of its solitude, though once seen" (147-48). It is interesting to note here the transformation of the train-traveller metaphor, which parallels the earlier passage describing Mr Ramsay observing his wife and son through the window. Where Mr Ramsay's use of the image had implied a kind of objectified stasis--"an illustration, a confirmation . . . to which one returns, fortified, and satisfied"--here it serves as a reminder of the dizzying, disorienting underside of modern life. If the advent of war means the destruction of ordered society, then it also means the destruction of its prevailing metaphors:

Did nature supplement what man advanced? Did she complete what he began? With equal complacence she saw his misery, condoned his meanness, and acquiesced in his torture. That dream, then, of sharing, completing, finding in solitude on the

beach an answer, was but a reflection in a mirror, and the mirror itself was but the surface glassiness which forms in quiescence when the nobler powers sleep beneath? Impatient, despairing yet loth to go . . . to pace the beach was impossible; contemplation was unendurable; the mirror was broken. (153)

Woolf conceives of vision, metaphor and paradigm as functions of the specific temporal and historical locus from which they emerge. We can see this as well in Orlando. Orlando's style of poetry or manner of seeing is always particular to the time s/he lives in. As the narrator tells us at one point: "it was not Orlando who spoke, but the spirit of the age" (188). We are told that a Mediaeval poet wishing to write about the rose, for example, without "the artifices of the greenhouse or conservatory . . . [which] prolong or preserve these fresh pinks and roses" will know only the violence of its short life, and not "the withered intricacies and ambiguities of our more gradual and doubtful age" (21-22). Indeed, Orlando frequently sees the world as if it were a canvas painted in the predominant artistic style of the time in which she is living. At the opening of the novel, for instance, which takes place in an unspecified "heraldic time," Orlando climbs a hill which commands a view reminiscent of the rolling landscapes painted by Uccello depicting impossibly huge vistas. From his position next to the oak tree, for example, Orlando can see, among other things: nineteen to forty English counties, the English Channel, rivers with pleasure boats on them, galleons setting out to sea, the spires of London and the smoke of the city as well as "the craggy top and serrated edges of Snowdon herself" (15).

The shattering of the mirror which takes place in "Time Passes" is also a motif in Orlando, where it is used to indicate a switch in time as well as in

paradigmatic focus. Indeed, Orlando teasingly recalls To the Lighthouse in precisely these terms:

. . . things remain much as they are for two or three hundred years or so, except for a little dust and a few cobwebs which one old woman can sweep up in a half an hour; a conclusion which, one cannot help feeling, might have been reached more quickly by the simple statement that 'Time Passed' (here the exact amount could be indicated in brackets) and nothing whatever happened. (76)

The description of the switch to the modern period in Orlando is of particular relevance, I believe, to the Cubist vision of "Time Passes." Both of these images, which are alike also in being ushered in by storms, are dominated by images of fragmentation in the visual and linguistic realms. In "Time Passes," for example, the narrator wonders if "calm should ever return or that we should ever compose from their fragments a perfect whole or read in the littered pieces the clear words of truth" (146), just as in Orlando we find that "Nothing could be seen whole or read from start to finish" (234). In "Time Passes" also the normal configuration of narrative conventions becomes reversed. Here, principal narrative events are reduced to casual parenthetical references, while the abstract flux of time takes over the main body of the text. As in Cubism, expected emphases are thus abandoned while the unexpected is exaggerated (Spencer 173).

If "Time Passes" shows the destruction of the two versions of "Subject and Object and the nature of reality" offered in "The Window," then the third section, "The Lighthouse" will be centered on the search for a new metaphor to replace them. Here, the rectangle of the window is substituted for the rectangle of the painter's canvas and, as Levenson notes, since the canvas can

neither be seen as a transparency nor a reflection, the terms "subject" and "object" will lose their validity. Lily must instead "create something which is neither of the world nor of the self" (Levenson Fate 178): "this other thing, this truth, this reality, which suddenly laid hands on her" (TL 180).

Lily resolves in this section that she will finally complete the painting she was unable to finish ten years previously. The difference between this second painting and the first one, however, is that Mrs Ramsay will now be absent from the series of "forms" that had once been part of the raw components of the composition. Where she once sat, there now exists a "centre of complete emptiness" (203). What is more, enough has changed in Lily's ten year absence to prevent her earlier solution, arrived at by the re-arrangement of Mrs Ramsay's salt cellar, from resolving the difficulties of composition. Lily's change in aesthetic focus, like that of the Post-Impressionists, is clearly linked to the turbulent shattering of certainties brought about by the recent experiences of war and death. Thinks Lily: "the great revelation had never come. The great revelation perhaps never did come. Instead there were little daily miracles, illuminations, matches struck in the dark" (183).

Lily's approach to painting, like Roger Fry's, is an essentially formalist one. Like Woolf's writing, however, her formalist interpretations are strongly Cubist in ideological approach. Her decision, which concerns "the question of relations of masses, of lights and shadows" and "the problem of space," is one which must be arrived at through a manipulation of real and abstract forms. In the earlier painting, William Bankes had found himself "interested" in the notion that Mrs Ramsay and James, "mother and child . . . objects of universal veneration . . . might be reduced to a purple shadow without irreverence" (61). Lily's justification for this liberty is typical of this

formal approach: "But the picture was not of them, she said. Or, not in his sense. There were other senses, too, in which one might reverence them. By a shadow here and a light there, for instance. Her tribute took that form" (61-2). Lily's portrayal of Mrs Ramsay as a "triangular purple shape" is in fact empathetic with Mrs Ramsay's sense of her own self reduced to a "wedge-shaped core of darkness" in the first section (72). In this state, furthermore, we may recall Mrs Ramsay's thought, that often, "she became the thing she looked at" (73), that "how if one was alone, one leant to things, inanimate things; trees, streams, flowers; felt they expressed one; felt they became one, felt they knew one, in a sense were one" (74). Mr Ramsay, it appears, is not alone in spending his days "in this seeing of angular essences, this reducing of lovely evenings, with all their flamingo clouds and blue and silver to a white deal four-legged table" (28). Both Lily and Mrs Ramsay also seem to share a common need to "reduce" the world around them, to "condense" it into more abstract, inanimate forms.

Lily echoes Roger Fry's disapproval of illusionist painting and yet, like Woolf, she goes further than either Fry or Vanessa Bell in creating an alternative method for conveying the nature of the reality she experiences through her art (Harrington 364). William Bankes, it is clear, having previously taught Lily "about perspective, about architecture" will now in turn learn from her about Post-Impressionist approaches to perception, something "which, to be honest, he had never considered before" (62). Lily's final solution to the problem of her painting will depend not so much on the Cézannist technique--popular amongst Woolf's Bloomsbury friends--of connecting the "far and the near" such as by "bringing the line of the branch across so"(62), but will instead be accomplished by means of the more Cubist technique of superimposing or overlapping one view upon another

(Harrington 364). Lily's ability to conceive visually in this way is demonstrated by her comic vision of Mr Ramsay's work as a "scrubbed kitchen table" lodged upside-down in a pear tree. Like Woolf, she indicates that she will not be content to transcribe the image that the scene dictates, but rather that her substance must be "wrenched" to suit its form. In a sense, it could be argued that Lily seeks to fulfill Picasso's contention that art must seek to express "what nature is not" (Roskill 148).

Conceptually, Lily's final painting bears many crucial resemblances to the basic idea of the Cubist work: it is based on a fusion of vision and memory; it contains both real and abstract forms; it encompasses competing, if not contradictory, messages; it makes use of negative, as well as positive space around forms; it includes information outside of the limits of the canvas; and it will seek "unity" without the stable reference of a determined vanishing point. Chiaroscuro is abandoned as well; instead, Lily systematically counter-balances light and shade according to her own design, so that: "a light here required a shadow there" (62). Her rejection of the "beauty" of the traditional portrait, likewise, is based on her sense that "it came too readily, came too completely. It stilled life--froze it" (201-2). She seeks instead an aesthetic whose emphasis will be on process rather than stasis, which she describes as: "the little agitations; the flush, the pallor, some queer distortion, some light or shadow, which made the face unrecognizable for a moment and yet added a quality one saw for ever after" (202).

Although it emerges out of a dialectic, the new painting will not offer a synthesis, but will seek rather to hold these in counterpoise, to "achieve that razor edge of balance between two opposite forces" (TL 219). This complex balance is also captured in the many references to weaves, knots, twists, and meshes which appear throughout the novel. Like these figures, Lily wishes

to capture in her painting the Cubist sense of perpetual becoming, to find "that very jar on the nerves, the thing itself before it has been made anything" (219). Losing her fear that the painting will be "rolled up and flung under a sofa," Lily begins to feel instead that it is not so much the picture itself "but . . . what it attempted . . . that 'remained for ever'" (204). Although she initially longs for Mrs Ramsay's power to make "of the moment something permanent," her final statement: "I have had my vision," uttered as it is in the past tense, indicates that at the point of completion, the vision has already past (Lee 133).

In the end, however, Lily's process of aesthetic creation parallels Mrs Ramsay's in that it is based on the momentary spatial apprehension of temporal flux. The past tense of Lily's utterance is in fact anticipated in an earlier passage showing Mrs Ramsay leaving the dining room at the end of the dinner: "With her foot on the threshold she waited a moment longer in a scene which was vanishing even as she looked, and then, as she moved and took Minta's arm and left the room, it changed, it shaped itself differently; it had become, she knew, giving one last look at it over her shoulder, already the past" (128).

Completing her picture also depends upon Lily's ability to reconcile what she sees with what she knows, to substitute Mrs Ramsay's absence with the presence of her memory and with her awareness of what is occurring at the present moment. Here, Bergsonian philosophy provides another link between Woolf and the Cubists. Although neither party ever claimed to owe any direct debt to Bergson, both Woolf's purported "stream-of-consciousness" technique and the Cubists' term "plastic consciousness" are based on a notion of the work of art as the simultaneous expression of the personality through memory and feeling.²⁹ Thus, as Lily herself tells us, "tunnelling her way into

her picture" means also tunneling "into the past" (197). In Orlando as well, memory is seen as the seamstress who stitches together "the rag-bag of odds and ends within us"; the element which agitates "a thousand odd, disconnected fragments, now bright, now dim" (61). Trying to visualize the fate of his lost princess, for example, Orlando invokes memory to Cubistically superimpose the face of her captor over her own: "he had to wait, perhaps half a minute, looking at the new picture which lay on top of the old, as one lantern slide is half seen through the next" (62).

Bergson believed that in order to express the personality, which we sense through intuition, the spatial construction of a painting must be arranged in a qualitative, alogical way, and not in the quantifiable, intellectual manner of traditional perspective. In order to attain direct cognition of the heterogeneous time of durational being (la durée), the artistic sensibility must transcend social conventions to create a new generative act. Bergson's "Introduction to Metaphysics," has often been seen as a key influence on the Cubists. The following quotation gives a good sense why:

No image will replace the intuition of the duration, but many different images, taken from quite different orders of things, will be able, through the convergence of their action, to direct consciousness to the precise point where there is a certain intuition to seize on. By choosing images as dissimilar as possible, any one of them will be prevented from usurping the place of the intuition it is instructed to call forth . . . (27-28)

This theory is close to the Cubist concept of "simultaneity," and, I would argue, close also to Lily's attempt in To the Lighthouse to combine matter and memory into a "razor's edge of balance." If Lily unites the foreground and background of her painting by means of a single, vertical line,

then any semblance of depth in her painting will by now have been destroyed. At this moment, writes Harrington, "it must become obvious that it is the picture frame, not the volume of exterior reality, that dictates the space of the painting. The atmospheric effect of natural light celebrated and analyzed by the impressionists has already been discarded in favor of the light and shadow on painted planes" (372). Like the central section, "Time Passes," Lily's stroke links the two masses on either side of it. As the Ramsays arrive at the lighthouse and Lily completes her painting--"He has landed . . . it is finished"--a simultaneous closure is thus implied for both the narrative and visual realms. But insofar as we choose to equate these narrative and visual structures, Harrington insists that we must also recognize that the central section "distorts, by what it represents, the more conventional view of reality portrayed by the other two sections" (364) so that the line in Lily's painting will create in itself a technical absurdity. Like the lighthouse, which provides a kind of narrative "vanishing point" for the novel, Lily's stroke provides the perceptual focus for her painting while at the same time denying it any one single meaning.

"So much depends . . . upon distance," thinks Lily, and it is as the Ramsays travel further and further from where she is standing that she is able to gain the clear, conceptual space necessary to invoke her own vision. Woolf herself had once claimed that she could not write when she found "the object . . . too near, too vast. I think perhaps it must recede before one can take a pen to it" (*L2*: 599). As Harrington has noted, from her vantage point facing the Ramsays' house Lily must continually "turn" from her canvas in order to see their boat, and thus must also "turn" back in order to paint (Harrington 369). This movement back and forth emulates the movement of the narrative, which is divided into sections focalized in turns

by Lily and the Ramsays from their respective vantage points. The fact that the Ramsays maintain motion until they reach the lighthouse means also that both parties will see each other from continually changing perspectives. The effect of this is to affirm in Lily her sense of the multiplicity of perception, the confidence in a vision which must "be perpetually remade" (206). As he looks at the lighthouse before him, James has similar feelings: "No, the other was also the Lighthouse. For nothing was simply one thing. The other was the Lighthouse too" (211). Having confirmed this sense, Lily turns back to her thoughts about the absent Mrs Ramsay, finally acknowledging: "one wanted fifty pairs of eyes to see with . . . Fifty pair of eyes were not enough to get round that one woman with" (224). This cannot be accomplished through the use of mere windows or mirrors, moreover, but through "some secret sense, fine as air, with which to steal through keyholes and surround her where she sat" (225). In effect, it must be accomplished through the ambiguous metaphorical space of a Cubist aesthetic.

If Lily and the Ramsays gain knowledge of the multiplicity of experience then what Orlando affirms is the multiplicity of the self. Orlando's personality can in itself be seen as an expression of Bergsonian durée, of "a continuous flux, a succession of states, each of which announces that which follows and contains that which precedes it" (Kern 25). She is also the perfect example of Judkins' Cubist criteria which call for the "deliberate oscillation of appearances" and the "conscious compounding of identities." With the advent of the modern period, Orlando herself comes to realize this:

For if there are (at a venture) seventy-six different times all ticking in the mind at once, how many different people are there not . . . all having lodgment at one time or another in the human spirit? . . . these selves of which we are built up, one on

top of another; as plates are piled on a waiter's hand, have attachments elsewhere, sympathies, little constitutions and rights of their own, call them what you will (and for many of these things there is no name) . . . for everybody can multiply from his own experience the different terms which his different selves have made with him. (235)

Like the Cubists, Orlando links this sense of the splintered self to the speed and movement of the modern era--its automobiles, omnibuses and aeroplanes:

After twenty minutes the body and mind were like scraps of torn paper rumbling from a sack, and, indeed, the process of motoring fast out of London so much resembles the chopping up small of identity which precedes unconsciousness and perhaps death itself that it is an open question in what sense

Orlando can be said to have existed at the present moment. (234)

Orlando's narrator also feels the effects of the change, for as the main narrative "catches up" to the present moment, she feels Orlando slipping more and more from her grasp. With the loss of a centralized consciousness, the idea of the omniscient narrator is thus thrown into doubt: "If only subjects, we might complain (for our patience is wearing thin), had more consideration for their biographers! What is more irritating than to see one's subject, on whom one has lavished so much time and trouble, slipping out of one's grasp altogether . . ." (204). By abdicating his/her omniscient position, Sharon Spencer has written:

The author has acknowledged the inadequacy of one sole perspective to account for the totality of even his own personal view. The scope of reality has not so much been abandoned to

chaos and irrationality as it has been expanded to include contradictory as well as complementary points of view. (65)

I have said that To the Lighthouse writes about a Cubist discourse rather than within a Cubist discourse. To be sure, the "form" of the novel reflects many of its proposed aesthetic innovations, notably its use of crossed, overlapping perspectives that move spatially from one character to another. But it is clear that Woolf, to some extent, is also justifying or at least confirming her feelings about the process of artistic creation as well. Although the character of Lily is often interpreted as being based on Vanessa Bell, Harrington, for one, has argued convincingly that while the subject-matter in Bell's paintings is for the most part recognizable, Lily's is not (376). The fact that Lily must explain to William Bankes what her picture is "of," for example, is one indication that it tends more towards the abstract than Bell's paintings. Woolf had in fact written to Bell on the subject of her paintings the year before To the Lighthouse was published. As the letter shows, Woolf was not always a passive beholder of her sister's art, but often an involved critic as well:

I expect the problem of empty spaces, and how to model them, has rather baffled you. There are flat passages, so that the design is not completely comprehended . . . Indeed, I am amazed, a little alarmed . . . by your combination of pure artistic vision and brilliance of imagination. A mistress of the brush--you are now undoubtedly that; but still I think the problems of design on a large scale slightly baffles you . . . But I was hugely impressed, and kept on saying that your genius as a painter, though rather greater than I like, does still shed a ray on mine. (L3: 270-71)

Choosing to break away from her Impressionist precursors, Lily initiates an aesthetic which will embody what "Subject and Object and the nature of reality" means to a modern civilization which no longer knows any clear connection between these three terms. Life, in this final metaphor, cannot be said to imitate art any more than art imitates life, for both are presented as interrelated, interdependent entities. Writes Fleishman: "external reality, personal identity, and aesthetic form are thus elided in a common formal order, so that the work demonstrates by its symbolic action the principles of art and life it envisions" (127). Still, we cannot actually know--Woolf probably did not know herself--exactly what Lily's painting would look like were it before us. What we do know though, is that Lily's aesthetic ideology develops along lines sympathetic to the formalist or Cubist strains of Post-Impressionism. And this, in turn, may say much about Woolf's sense of her own aesthetic in the other novels. If Lily is indeed Vanessa Bell, then she is also Woolf, taking Post-Impressionism and the interrelations of the arts to her own sense of their natural conclusions. No longer merely recording or reflecting the world outside, Woolf, like Lily, sees the role of the arts as one which can draw the mediative stroke within the "gigantic chaos" of modern society.

Notes

¹ I cannot agree with Jack Stewart that it is not until the time of Between the Acts that Woolf would have had access to Cubism through "the general ferment of ideas that made her late stylistic changes possible" ("Cubist" 86).

² See especially Art Journal 47: "Revising Cubism" (1988).

³ Chipp 194. Critical opinions concerning the time, place and date of the coining of "Cubism" differ. Kahnweiler (in Chipp 250) dates it from the 1909 Salon des Indépendents while Apollinaire himself credited Matisse with the distinction in 1908 (in Chipp 226). For other accounts, see Gamwell 15; Golding 23; Robbins 282 and Roskill 27.

⁴ See Rosenbaum Victorian Bloomsbury 4; and Rosenbaum ed. The Bloomsbury Group, passim.

⁵ The best example of this kind of approach is that of Rosenblum. For a more detailed account, see Roskill.

⁶ Although Lodge accepts Jakobson's classification of Cubism as metonymical, he is not quoted directly. The quotation given is in Dubnick 15.

⁷ The basic framework for this argument can be found in Frank's two original articles: "Spatial Form in Modern Literature" and "Spatial Form: An Answer to Critics." These and Frank's subsequent articles on the subject are compiled in a recent volume called The Idea of Spatial Form (New Brunswick: 1991).

⁸ Until this point, most critics have made only casual references to the possible link between Woolf and Cubism. Rosenblum has said that Woolf uses Cubist techniques in Mrs Dalloway in order to reveal "the simultaneous and contradictory fabric of reality itself" (40), while Jonathon Quick has claimed that the "highly disjunctive narrative" of Jacob's Room has "Cubist

qualities" ("Post Impressionism" 566). Jack Stewart has produced what to my knowledge is the only full length essay on Cubist elements in one of Woolf's novels, although a number of book-length studies exist relating her novels to painting or to Post-Impressionism in general. For examples of this see Dowling, Gillespie, and Torgovnick.

⁹ Guillaume Apollinaire and others record meetings between the group known as the "Puteaux Cubists"--so-called so because they met at Jacques Villon's studio in Puteaux--and Maurice Princet, a mathematician and amateur painter who related non-Euclidian geometry and the fourth dimension to the sense of space created in Cubist works. There is no evidence, however, that this was ever applied in any rigorous way. For details, see Chipp 223. Interestingly enough, Woolf did make an allusion to the fourth dimension in her diary in 1935:

It struck me tho' that I have now reached a further stage in my writers advance. I see that there are 4? dimensions; all to be produced; in human life; & that leads to a far richer grouping & proportion: I mean: I: & the not I: & the outer & the inner--no I'm too tired to say: but I see it: & this will affect my book on Roger. Very exciting: to grope on like this. New combinations in psychology & body--rather like painting. This will be the next novel, after The Years. (D3: 353)

¹⁰ It should be noted that while Perloff associates the anti-Symbolists with literary Cubism, Christopher Gray, a Cubist art critic, traces Cubism's roots to the Symbolist and Idealist movements whose major figures include Baudelaire and Mallarmé in literature and Kant and Hegel in philosophy. See Gray, "The Idealist Background of Cubism" Cubist Aesthetic Theories 7-20.

¹¹ "Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown," Captain's Death Bed 91.

¹² For a discussion of these elements see Alter and Church, *passim*; and Hailey 69-73.

¹³ Upon reading a manuscript of Stein's that she was considering for publication with the Hogarth Press, Woolf wrote to Roger Fry in 1925:

We are lying crushed under an immense manuscript of Gertrude Stein's. I cannot brisk myself up to deal with it--whether her contortions are genuine and fruitful, or only such spasms as we might all go through in sheer impatience at having to deal with English prose. Edith Sitwell says she's gigantic, (meaning not the flesh but the spirit). For my own part I wish we could skip a generation--skip Edith and Gertrude and Tom [T.S. Eliot] and Joyce and Virginia and come out in the open again, when everything has been restarted, and runs full tilt, instead of trickling and teasing in this irritating way. (L3: 209)

¹⁴ "Modern Fiction," Common Reader 149-154.

¹⁵ In his book Art, Bell described all works of art capable of arousing a state he loosely referred to as "aesthetic emotion" as exhibiting "significant form." The main feature of significant form was that it transcended any considerations of morality by reaching a realm of "pure art."

¹⁶ "Pictures" Moment and Other Essays 140.

¹⁷ Anticipating an angry reaction to his Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition of 1912, Fry assuaged the public by explaining in his catalogue introduction that the works exhibited were expressive of what he called the "Classic Spirit." For full text, see "The French Post-Impressionists," in Fry, Vision and Design 237-243.

¹⁸ Note that all short stories discussed in this section are collected in Woolf, The Complete Shorter Fiction ed. Susan Dick. All page references will be to this edition.

¹⁹ L2: 15. Woolf makes frequent note of "blues and greens" in the Post-Impressionist painters she knew or admired, such as Duncan Grant (see L2: 130). In 1930 she introduced a catalogue of her sister's paintings, saying: "her vision excites a strong emotion and yet when we have dramatised it or poetised it or translated it into all the blues and greens, and fines and exquisites and subtles of our vocabulary, the picture itself escapes" (qtd. in Rosenbaum, Bloomsbury Group 172). It is interesting to note also that Lily Briscoe, in To the Lighthouse, is seen "scraping her palette of all those mounds of blue and green" (57).

²⁰ For a good discussion of structural patterns in Woolf's short stories, see Avrom Fleishman, "Forms of the Woolfian Short Story" in Freedman 44-70.

²¹ Glass Roof 3. Other critics have also drawn attention to the problems of an Impressionist reading. Jean Guiget notes of Jacob's Room, for example, that: "the alternation between realistic descriptions and inward analyses gives way to a constant confrontation between impressions and the inaccessible, indescribable experience they conceal" (223). Sharon Proudfit also refutes the idea that Woolf can be considered an Impressionist, noting instead that "the stages of composition are strictly circumscribed, the design is so carefully executed as an endeavor to reveal the reality beneath appearance, that there can be no doubt that Mrs Woolf was availing herself of Post-Impressionist methods" (207). Others, such as Beach, have suggested links between Woolf and Expressionism.

²² "Impressionism" 238. Stewart claims, however, not to refer to the technique of "Literary Impressionism" per se.

²³ Gleizes and Metzinger discussed the notion of "plastic consciousness" in Du Cubisme. See Chipp 209.

²⁴ Some Cubist critics also choose to include a third phase, the "Hermetic," which essentially accounts for those works which exhibit the characteristics of the first two phases. Between them, however, the two major phases encompass the larger philosophical project of Cubism as a whole and as such will be sufficient for a discussion of Woolf.

²⁵ All references to the reprint of this story in The Complete Shorter Fiction.

²⁶ The term "primitive" is used here contextually as it was applied by both the Cubists and by critics such as Roger Fry and Clive Bell. Today, however, the term is often seen as symptomatic of the kind of paternal attitude with which many Western art collectors and critics have regarded African art and artifacts. For an interesting examination of the issues this raises, see "The Politics of Roger Fry's Vision and Design" in Torgovnick, Gone Primitive 85-104.

²⁷ "The Lady in the Looking Glass" (in The Complete Shorter Fiction), which was written in 1929, may have in fact been a sketch for part of Between the Acts, since it too concerns a character named Isabella.

²⁸ Geoffrey Hartman, "Virginia's Web" in Vogler 78.

²⁹ For a discussion of Woolf and Bergson, see Kumar; for Cubism and Bergson, see Antliff.

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